

Best Integrated Writing

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Best Integrated Writing

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Courses at Wright State University



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No task such as this is accomplished by a single person. A community of people co-creates the work. I acknowledge and thank the people whose support and contributions figure in the completion of the third edition of *Best Integrated Writing*. Thanks to Dr. Carol Loranger, chair of the department of English. Dr. Loranger's guidance and support has helped shaped the journal in these early years. I look forward to her continued help as the journal grows to suit the needs of the community we serve. Dean Kristin Sobolik, of the College of Liberal Arts, has also encouraged and supported our work, and we owe her a debt of gratitude. *Best Integrated Writing* showcases the dedication, perseverance, and intellectual inquiry of Wright State University students. It would not exist, however, without the vision and commitment of the first editor, Scott Geisel.

Lori King and Tracy Silvert, in the Office of General Counsel and Stephen Rumbaugh, of Communications and Marketing, offered professional expertise and assisted us with acquiring the license to use the Wright State University logo and Mission Statement.

The Deans of each college and the chairs of each department deserve recognition for encouraging their faculty who teach Integrated Writing courses to submit student work for review. As our journal continues to expand and take flight, I look forward to more participation and collaboration from the Wright State community.

Thanks to Jane Wildermuth, Head Digital Services Librarian for her advice and expertise. Thanks also to Jennifer Sheets, Administrative Support Coordinator in the Department of English who provides me with the list of courses that might offer work eligible for inclusion in the journal.

I give special thanks to Elisabeth Shook, Digital Initiatives Librarian. Elisabeth's untiring work mediating between me, on one end, and the publishers, on the other, is manifest in the publication you read now. Her research into the publication options, licensing issues, costs, and turnaround time constitutes the glue that binds this project together--in both digital and print formats. Her effort, then, brought this edition from concept to reality.

Thanks to the students whose work is included in this edition, and thank you to each faculty member who nominated student work for inclusion. Your dedication to the intellectual development of our students puts our mission statement to practice: we transform the lives of our students. Transformation is often a transactional

exchange. In serving our students and the broader community, faculty and staff are transformed. We continue to learn and deepen our intellectual inquiry even as we lead our students on their own journeys of self-creation.

As our university Mission Statement indicates, in transforming the lives of our students, we extend our transformative power into the communities we serve—and those communities are increasingly global. *Best Integrated Writing: The Journal of Integrated Writing Courses at Wright State University*, has been downloaded over 5,000 times—testimony to the power and relevance of its academic community.

Editor's Note

We transform the lives of our students and the communities we serve

-- WSU Mission Statement

It is fitting that we have included the Wright State University logo and Mission Statement in this new edition of the journal. The overarching theme of the selected works is discovery and transformation through intellectual inquiry. Much of the work in this issue is meditative and self-reflective because the personal informs the academic. Our intellectual acts of self-creation transform ourselves and the world around us.

The Wright State community fosters the professional, personal, and academic development of the whole student. College provides us an opportunity to train for a profession and prepare for a career path, and Wright State University offers many varied opportunities for professional development. Yet, at the same time, our college experiences allow us the generative emotional and intellectual experiences that carve-out space for self-creation and the development of a critical consciousness.

Ann Brake, one of our student contributors, described the manifestation of this theme of discovery and transformation through intellectual inquiry best when she labeled herself, “a lifelong seeker.” A seeker of knowledge develops the power to change the self and, in doing so, to change the world. This journal, published by the university named for the brothers who transformed all our lives, springs from a community of innovators and creators whose dreams, ambitions, and vision take flight in the pages of this journal.

With this edition, we look backward and forward simultaneously. Several works engage with literature, history, and ancient art and artifacts in order to better understand the human condition. Some of the essays meditate on what it means to be a person of faith. Also included in this edition are different perspectives on a single work. Each of these essays demonstrates the ways in which interpretation and analysis are ineluctably linked to our lived experiences.

Also included is an essay extolling the benefits of a relatively new technology—E-cigarettes—that might aid people in the cessation of smoking, and a visual presentation that clarifies the sometimes controversial issue of stem cell research. These works present the ideas of transformation and “seeking” in a less meditative,

more scientific way. Nevertheless, the thread of transformation through intellectual inquiry and the acquisition of knowledge remains.

Our student authors represent an array of academic disciplines. They major in English, French, Music, History, Integrated Language Arts, Middle Childhood Education with a focus on Math and Science, Organizational Leadership, Mechanical Engineering, Psychology, and Chemistry. While their fields of discipline may differ, they hold in common the pursuit of excellence and authenticity in scholarship.

-- M. C. C.

A Gray Area

LINDSAY SMITH

CLS 1600: Introduction to Classical Mythology, Fall 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Aaron Wolpert

Lindsay Smith is a senior majoring in Integrated Language Arts in the department of English. She will be a graduate student in the Wright State University College of Education and Human Service in the fall of 2016. She is a reader and literature buff, and she looks forward to sharing her love of the classics with her future students.

Lindsay notes:

When I began writing this paper, I was looking to analyze *The Odyssey* from a new lens and perhaps add a new thread to the critical conversation. As I unpacked the work, I was intrigued by the gender dynamics and decided to explore it. When an audience reads this piece, I hope that it conveys a new perspective on this classic epic that is both engaging and thought-provoking.

Dr. Wolpert notes:

In this essay, Lindsay has produced a graduate-level analysis of the intentionally ambiguous gender dynamics explored in Homer's *Odyssey*. With meticulous attention to details of the text, she has supported a nuanced argument about the manner in which Homer subverted the likely men-are-superior orthodoxy of his era in the depiction of an--at least occasionally--powerful Circe.

In the world of classical literature, Homer's *The Odyssey* has been canonized as a principal text of authority regarding the Greek tradition and mythology. Scholars of the legendary epic may refer to its many narratives to reconstruct the social hierarchy of the era as well as to gain some insight on how the social status quo influenced and quite possibly singularly determined the relationship dynamics between men and women. In a close reading of one of these narratives, namely Odysseus' encounter with Circe in book 10 (lines 149- 597), much about the power dynamic between Greek men and women in *The Odyssey* is revealed. While many may read this encounter between Odysseus and Circe as further evidence which confirms that power was a privilege exclusively enjoyed by Greek men, there is another interpretation of this narrative that more readily entertains the concept of power as a tool available to both of the sexes. On the surface, Odysseus' layered encounter with Circe may seem like a struggle for power that divides them along gender lines, but I would argue that this struggle for power does not divide the genders but unites them in a liminal space between dominion and submission that makes power a fluid possession accessible to both men and women in what has been traditionally perceived as a patriarchal narrative. The purpose of this synthesis then, is to examine how Circe's potion, the sexual encounter between Odysseus and Circe, and Circe's captivity and release of Odysseus and his men reconstructs an understanding of the power dynamic between Greek men and women in *The Odyssey* that expands the prevailing view of Greek men as the single proprietors of the

power position to include the very significant role women also occupied as power players in this classic epic.

When Odysseus comes into contact with the witch Circe, the two engage in a power struggle which suggests that power is a fluid possession that is not only available to both of them, but also traps them in between a position of absolute power as each tries to gain the upper hand. That Odysseus and Circe are locked in a battle for power is clearly seen in Circe's application of, and Odysseus' immunity to, her potion. When Circe gives Odysseus her potion, it is her attempt to gain the upper hand in the situation. Of her attempt Odysseus states, "She gave me the cup and I drank it off, but it did not bewitch me. So she struck me with her wand and said: 'Off to the sty, with the rest of your friends'" (Book 10, lines 338-341). When Circe gives Odysseus her potion, she is clearly in a position of power. As she sentences Odysseus to the same fate as his men, she is dismissive and arrogant because she has gained the advantage in their tug of war for control. When Circe "strikes" Odysseus with her wand, she thinks that she has dominated him, but the fact that Odysseus is immune to her potion also gives him a claim to some of the power. Even though Odysseus has power over Circe because he cannot be changed into a pig like his men, Circe still retains some of the power because Odysseus' men are still pigs in her sty. That both Odysseus and Circe can stake some claim to the power in the situation, but not the controlling interest, shows that this struggle to essentially come out on top places both of them in a tug of war between submission and dominion that forces each to make concessions and negotiations to gain the

most control. When Circe thinks she has the power, she seems to be easing out of the liminal space, only to be thrust back into it when Odysseus is impervious to her witchery. Similarly, Odysseus seems to have the power when Circe is catering to him, but he, too, is thrust back into that liminal space when he realizes that Circe still controls the fate of his men. In this way, neither Odysseus nor Circe have absolute power, but rather operate from an in between place that allows both to move in and out of the power position. When Circe gives her potion to Odysseus, it becomes clear that the pursuit of power is not limited to gender, and its subjectivity to change between the sexes shows that perhaps Greek men and women both used power to assert their own agendas in *The Odyssey*.

If the outcome of Circe's potion showcases that power is a fluid possession accessible to both Greek men and women as they oscillate between positions of dominion and submission, the sexual encounter between Odysseus and Circe, shows that power was an exchangeable commodity utilized by both men and women to gain control. When Circe realizes that she cannot control Odysseus with her potion and he draws his sword, she quickly offers sex in exchange for her life. In her offer Circe states, "Well then, sheath your sword and let's climb into my bed and tangle in love there, so we may come to trust each other" (Book 10, lines 355-57). In this case, Circe's sexual abilities are her power which she exchanges for her life. When she asks Odysseus to go to bed with her, Circe falls back into a place where she has given a lot, but not all, of her power to Odysseus. As a result, she does not have the full power, but she is also not powerless. Furthermore, and as

shown by the last part of the aforementioned quote, Circe is willing to exchange some of her power to build trust between her and Odysseus. She is willing to submit to him if it means that she can keep some of her control and her life. On the other hand, Odysseus also uses Circe's proposition for sex to further establish his power in his quest to save his men and himself from further trouble. In the same way that Circe exchanges the power she gets from propositioning sex for her life, Odysseus exchanges the power he gets from having sex with women to keep himself out of more danger. Before Odysseus agrees to have sex with Circe, he makes her promise that she will not make his situation any worse. In his demand, Odysseus states, "No, Goddess, I'm not getting into any bed with you unless you agree first to swear a solemn oath that you're not planning some new trouble for me" (Book 10, lines 363-366). By making Circe promise that she will not trick him again, Odysseus exchanges his sexual power for protection. Even though Odysseus concedes to Circe's request, he has not given up all of his power; he has just exchanged it to continue his mission. That both Odysseus and Circe exchange some of their power when they agree to go to bed together shows that power can be a negotiation tool used to achieve goals and find middle ground between operatives of control.

When it is time for Odysseus and his men to continue their voyage home, Odysseus and Circe both move in and out of the position of power. After spending a year on the island with Circe, it seems that both Odysseus and Circe have become comfortable in the middle ground between dominance and submission that they have established with one another. It is when Odysseus asks Circe to stay true to her

promise to let him and his men go home that the two again begin to vie for the ultimate claim to power. When Odysseus asks Circe to let him and his men go, he takes control of the situation--and the power--by using Circe's promise as leverage to get him and his men home. He appeals to Circe stating, "I went up to Circe's beautiful bed, and touching her knees I beseeched the goddess: Circe fulfill now the promise you made to send me home. I am eager to be gone..." (Book 10, lines 500-504). When Odysseus asks Circe to send him and his men home, he uses a gentler approach to force Circe into the position of submission. However, even though Circe consents to send Odysseus home which gives him some power, she does not relent into the full position of submission because she controls how Odysseus will get home. Again, neither Odysseus nor Circe has complete control in the situation, but neither has conceded all of their power to the other. That Circe still has some power over what happens to Odysseus is made clear when she tells Odysseus that she is sending him through Hades as he makes his way home, and he begs her to guide him on the journey. When he finds out that he is going to Hades, Odysseus pleads, "And who will guide me on this journey Circe? No man has ever sailed his black ship to Hades" (Book 10, lines 524-525). When Odysseus asks for Circe's assistance he not only gives up some portion of his power, he recognizes that Circe has more power than he does. This is significant at this point in the narrative because it is the precursor to Odysseus' reunion with Penelope where he will again engage in a power struggle with a woman.

That Odysseus must depend on Circe to guide him and his men home shows that both Odysseus and Circe are operating from some space between submission and dominance that allows both to share in some of the power, and arguably prepares Odysseus with the skills to negotiate his return to Ithaca with Penelope.

In many episodes of *The Odyssey*, the dynamic of power is a common thread that largely influences many of the outcomes for Odysseus on his quest to return home. However, in Odysseus' exchange with the witch, Circe, this power dynamic expands to factor in a space in between the agencies of submission and dominance that considers a place for women in the power position. In deconstructing the use and exchange of power between men and women in this episode of *The Odyssey*, the usually black and white depiction of relations between Greek men and women in the epic may be repainted to include a gray area where both genders coexisted by manipulating situations of power.

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Medical Journal of Leontius, Slave of Vitus

Aelianus

*A first-person historical fiction written from the perspective of a
Roman 'doctor'*

AMANDA BUCHER

CLS 3500: Genders and Sexualities in Classical Antiquity, Spring 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Aaron Wolpert

Amanda is a Middle Childhood Education, Math & Science, major in the college of Education and Human Services. She is an avid cat lover and lives with her wife and their cats. In addition to being a student at WSU, she works three jobs--two of which entail hands-on education. Her hectic schedule invigorates her, however. She states "I've never been happier."

Amanda notes:

I learned a lot in the weeks leading up to this paper, and wrote down information on the side that I thought might be useful for the paper. Doing research on the side is very easy when you have such an amazing and engaged lecturer who will answer any questions and provide the class with interesting and relevant primary source material. I hope the audience will engage with this work with an open mind, and will be able to place themselves in the shoes of the narrator. If I can make anybody feel like they're experiencing it as they read, then I'll be happy.

Dr. Wolpert notes:

For this assignment, students adopt an imagined ancient perspective in order to develop primary source-informed views on the lived experience of views on gender and sexuality in the Roman world. In this submission, Amanda manages to make useful reference to a remarkable range of ancient documents, all the while crafting a credibly Roman voice. Her doctor-slave offers pitch-perfect commentary not only on the presumed physical causes of disease but also on the moral and social implications of bodily infirmity, in particular in relation to the marriage laws imposed by Augustus, the first emperor of Rome.

Before he passed away, my father advised me to keep a written record of my work with medicine, as some cases presented in the past may be relevant to some presented in the future. He was a Greek doctor, taken as a slave by Gratianus Aelianus during his decade of military service as a senior officer. I was born into slavery to the Aelianus family, here in the countryside of Hispania. My parents are both dead now, but I, Leontius, still live in service to the family. My master, Vitus Aelianus, is an experienced military man like his father. He's a good man: honorable to a fault, well-spoken, and rules over his wife, Valentina, seven sons, and home with love and wisdom.

That said, he is not without his share of frustrating flaws: Vitus can be reckless, thinks too much with his heart--at times--and is always in love with more than one person, at any given time. In exchange for not complaining about his own affairs when he gets home, he turns a blind eye to those of his wife, and only asks that she avoid married men, and not bear another man's child to him. The laws against adultery don't mean much to him, so long as no one is getting hurt in the process. All in the household have been forbidden to speak of the amount of sexual freedom he gives her, of course. If this written account is discovered, I will be severely punished.

Hilarius and Junius, the two youngest children of Vitus Aelianus, fell ill today. I have never seen anything like it. Their symptoms seem to come and go, as does their need for the toilet. Vitus's freedman, Sergius, suggested that I investigate

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the activities of the boys in the last few hours before they became ill. I suppose that's as good of a suggestion as any, since just examining their symptoms has me stumped and frustrated. My father's records contain nothing helpful to this current problem.

Sergius and I questioned the children in the presence of their father and found that they had been playing in a grove of trees nearby. Further questioning revealed that they had been daring each other to try eating leaves, berries, and flowers from the various plants in the area! I mentioned to Sergius that recklessness seems to be an inherited trait in this family, and he had the nerve to imply that it must be contagious, as I was quite reckless at their age as well. Poisoning myself by accident was never something I did at their age. I pointed out to him that I shouldn't have to remind him of it, as we grew up together.

I'm not certain I ever want to have children if this is how frustrating they're going to be! Hilarius is old enough to know better, yet he still goaded the three-year-old into a potentially deadly pissing contest! He's in a great deal of trouble with his father over this, but that's not what I would consider comforting when this shouldn't have happened at all!

After a lot of searching through the vegetation and examining it to see what all had been ripped off and eaten by the youngest masters of the house, we did manage to figure out what had caused the illness--despite Sergius's irritating commentary on my ability to track through plant life (Do I look like a hunter to him?). When ingested, the berries of the lantana plant are dangerous to livestock and humans, but not necessarily deadly, depending on the amount of berries consumed.

The boys received a stern lecture from me on exactly why they couldn't ever do that again, and I gave them a small dose of a mustard solution to induce vomiting in order to get the berries out of their stomachs. They will likely be miserable for a couple of days, but at least they should live.

After I had finished treating the boys, I went for a walk with Sergius to get away from the crying and misery of poor Hilarius and Junius. There is nothing more I can do for them, and sitting around to watch them in pain doesn't sit well with me. With Sergius I can at least relax as much as is appropriate. We argue frequently, but (although I'd die before I would ever admit it aloud--and especially to him) I enjoy the debates we have. Tonight we discussed the recent changes to the marriage laws of the Empire. As usual, we differed in opinion. I enjoy being in the presence of someone who has no issues with letting a slave speak his mind, and we discussed them at length.

Sergius finds the new laws to be perfectly logical; therefore, he has no problem with them. If the laws make sense, why question them? That's his frustrating way. If the logic tracks clean, then leave the heart out of it and trust one's own intellect. I had to disagree with him somewhat, if only to spur on the conversation and watch his reactions to my dissenting opinion.

The reforms do make sense, but I don't like the idea of some law controlling when people marry or when they reproduce. It doesn't seem acceptable for a law dictated by man to determine when and with whom the natural functions of the mind and body ought to occur; for example, some young girls are mature enough to marry when they are fifteen or sixteen, while other girls may not be

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mature enough to marry until they are seventeen or eighteen years old. I insisted it was the same for boys: Vitus certainly wasn't ready for marriage when it was inflicted upon him by his father.

I tried these arguments and many others that I couldn't so passionately put my heart into, yet Sergius remained stubbornly set in his opinion. This is usual for him on almost any topic we've ever discussed, and I suspect it's the same in any disagreement he's ever had with anybody else. By the time we returned to the family home, neither of us had been persuaded to see things more in the way of the other.

I left him to go check on the boys, but gave them a concoction to help them sleep through the night. Most of the symptoms appear to have subsided, and as I prepare for bed, they are both sleeping comfortably and deeply. Their mother is sleeping in a chair by their bedside and will wake me if I am needed.

Though there is quite a bit of space between my master's large property and the home of the nearest family, it isn't such a bad walk to make it to their home. Marcus Severus sent a servant to my master requesting my services as a physician. They own a large farming property, and there was an accident with one of his freedman and a large blade. I advised the servant to instruct those currently tending to the young man to put pressure on the wound with clean cloth, and followed him shortly to tend to the injury. My time spent patching up the wounds of the Aelianus family served me well in this case. The injury was not as bad as it had originally looked once the bleeding had stopped and I was able to clean up some of the blood.

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From questioning him, I was able to deduce that he was lying about the cause of the injury.

It wasn't until I had managed to bully everybody else out of the room on the basis that none of them knew what they were doing--and I did--that I got the full story out of him.

His father and stepmother had recently arranged for him to marry a young lady of astonishing beauty from another nearby family. Lucia Horatius doesn't want to be married to him, but had agreed to the marriage for her own reasons. I can only wonder why, because the young man is definitely not the sharpest sword in the armory. He had been thinking of his marital problems and the impending birth of his first child, and the distraction had caused him to injure himself. I advised he go to the village nearby and use the services of a prostitute to release some stress. Though it is the women who must do most of the work in child-bearing and child-rearing, it isn't unusual for first time fathers to feel anxious. I have observed that even the best examples of manhood I've ever met show symptoms of nerves. Childbirth is dangerous, and men don't wish to lose their wives to it; in addition, it seems some also worry about being able to provide the best for their child (though this worry is doubtless more common in the less wealthy classes).

Today a woman snuck out to the Aelianus property to be seen by me. She had heard somewhere that Greek physicians are the best (and she's not wrong), and urgently needed my assistance. With my master's permission, I took the woman to the nearest couch and sat her down, as she was quite distressed. Try as we might,

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not master, Sergius, or myself could get her name or her family name out of her. She insisted that we must be kept in the dark for our own protection. I gave her some heavily watered down wine to calm her and soothe her throat, which was rough from harsh breathing.

It took many promises of silence on our part, but by the time we gave them, we were so curious about the cause of her upset that all three of us vowed to keep her secret just to hear her story. The nameless woman was on the run from her husband, who she feared would kill her if she dared to go back to him. As is his legal right, he had administered to her a sound beating for daring to speak to a male guest of his when he asked her a question. The guest had laughed as he'd watched his friend beat her. After he'd left, her husband beat her again, and used her body for his pleasure. When he'd left in the morning, she had run away, believing it her only chance to live.

More than once I've tended to women whose husbands have injured them so grievously, but it always saddens me. Just because it is a man's legal right to beat his wife doesn't mean he should do it. I treated her, and we sheltered her for the night while Vitus decided what to do with her. Sergius and I urged him to turn her over to her husband to keep himself out of trouble, but he wouldn't listen. Because we had given our oaths, he insisted we had to honor them. In the morning, he sent her on her way with a couple of slaves as a gift to help her get wherever she wished to go.

Despite my status as a slave, I enjoy my position and my work. My master is kind – perhaps even too lax at times – and his wife and children are a delight to be near. Households in the cities are far more strictly controlled by the father who rules over them, as we pretend to be when we have company. That isn't to say that Vitus can't be strict when it's called for, or he's in an irritable mood, but those times are, thankfully, rare. The countryside we live in is beautiful, quiet, with our closest neighbors an hour's walk away.

There are so many less people living here than in the nearest village. One wouldn't think that there would be enough people to keep an old physician busy, and that would be incorrect. I suspect that even physicians in Rome don't have nearly as busy a life as I seem to have. If anything can go wrong on a specific day, it will. The Aelianus family has the strangest sort of luck: I'm not sure if the gods blessed them or cursed them.

Some of the other slaves were repairing a portion of the roof that had started to cave slightly. When Sergius passed underneath it, it fell on his head, cutting him. I'm concerned that some impurities may have gotten into the wound, but have cleaned it thoroughly. He was only unconscious for a few minutes, and is fighting me on whether or not he needs to stay in bed. Never mind that the man gets dizzy when he stands! Never mind that he claims he has the worst headache of his life! I had to tell him that I was worried about him to convince him to stay down.

After dealing with that and the injuries sustained by the slaves working on the roof over the course of the day, Junius came to see me complaining of a terrible

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pain in his arm. He was crying when his father carried him in. His mother turned her back for a minute, and Junius was in a tree and then just as quickly back out of it and on the ground. The arm is broken, but it will heal fine. For a toddler, he certainly manages to get around. There's a lot of his father in him.

Tonight I found out why Sergius has decided it isn't logical for him to get married as the reforms dictate he should. He insists we're too far away from proper civilization for anybody who cares to actually tax him for it. There are no available women in the area that he finds suitable, and he is unwilling to travel further to find a wife. It was also made clear to me that he greatly prefers men: this I learned when one of our arguments ended with me on my knees, acting as a woman for him. I haven't been with a man since I was a teenager, many years ago, and was surprised to learn that I still enjoyed it. We have decided to be cautious and keep our sexual relations a secret, but I'm not sure I mind.

The appeal of having an extramarital affair has been beyond anything but my own theoretical standing for years now, but I think I understand thoroughly now. That which is forbidden is the most attractive. The secrecy, the intellectual connection, and the duration of the act make this particular thing more desirable. Vitus has mentioned Ovid's work to me before; in particular, I am reminded of one where he is giving his married mistress instructions on how to flirt with and tease him in front of her husband at a dinner party.

Though neither of us are married, our own social statuses make our sexual relationship scandalous. I find myself wanting for it, even alone in my room. Better poets and writers than I have expounded upon the ways that it is better to be with a man than a woman. Women have their delights and their sexual uses, but I've never had sex as good with a woman as I have with Sergius. Women's reproductive organs, though similar, differ enough from those of a man's that they can't possibly know how to stimulate them to the greatest effect as a man would. I'm pleased Sergius doesn't think himself unmanly for engaging in these acts with me and that he seems to want them to continue.

I found out while treating a cut on my master's forearm that Sergius has found a suitable bride. I suspect he wouldn't have agreed to the marriage at all if Vitus Aelianus wasn't so persuasive and obnoxiously insistent upon getting his way or doing what he thinks is right for a friend and former servant. She's beautiful, and seems intelligent, though I doubt she could keep up with her future husband in conversation. Titiana comes from a large family. Her father is a senator. That's all anybody has told me. Apparently it's all I need to know. I suspect Vitus might have learned of our affair and is putting a stop to it before he has to punish me for it. Causing pain to others when there's another way is not in his nature despite his impressive military career.

I dared to mention that I didn't like the match when Vitus was offering Sergius advice on which hole of hers to invade on their wedding night. Don't ask

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me what happened after, as discussing it leaves the taste of bile in my mouth that mixes poorly with the taste of jealousy. Suffice it to say, I don't think I'll be saying anything about it again.

Titiana has fallen ill only a week before her wedding. I did not cause this, as some suspect, because of my jealousy. I heal people. I don't hurt them. I'm a surgeon, not a murderer. Let this record bear the truth: I know what the problem is, and there is absolutely no way that I caused it. She has not menstruated in a fairly long time but insists she is a virgin. As one who has studied the work of Hippocrates and other physicians under my father, I am well aware of the imperfections that exist in the body of every woman, and first checked to see if it was the coldness of her body, a problem inside her cunt, or a problem of the mind halting the natural processes.

To say that her future groom, her parents, and I were surprised when the cause of the problem turned out to be an unexpected pregnancy making her nauseous and exhausted is an understatement.

One look at Sergius was all I needed to determine that the child is not his.

Sergius is rarely prone to displays of emotion, but the furrowing of his brow, the narrowing of his dark eyes, and the way his fists and jaw clenched were all I needed to see to determine that he was extremely livid. After some questioning

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from him and her scandalized parents, the sex-hungry girl finally admitted that she has been sleeping with an older slave who originally came to his owners from Egypt. He isn't even the property of the family, but that of their nearest neighbors. The two of them have been sneaking out to fuck for months. She claims to love him.

I don't know what will happen to either of them, and, quite frankly, my relief is enough that I can't bring myself to care. Titiana claims to have been enticed to experiment by paintings of the act hanging around the home and attempted to blame her crimes on her distraught parents. Sergius has left to go visit his parents for a time, insisting he doesn't want to be anywhere within leagues of the girl for some time.

The wedding has been called off.

I couldn't remember where I had last placed this record and so haven't updated it for a year. Much has happened, as so much tends to happen, over the course of a year. I have been made a freedman, though I have not left Vitus's home. There is much for me to do here, and this is where Sergius wishes to remain as well. We have our own jobs to do here, and now my work has increased again.

A new member was added to the household yesterday, much to Vitus's absolute delight: they've finally had a girl. Amelia is the most beautiful baby I have ever seen. She looks so much like her mother, with her dark hair and olive skin though she has her father's baby blue eyes. The village midwife came to take care of

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the birth, though she requested I assist due to the age of the mother (who is at the end of her bearing years), to aid her in preventing Vitus the heartbreak of losing his wife to childbirth. Valentina, the midwife, and I privately speculated that this should be her last child. This brings the total number of children to eight. Amelia's seven older brothers are excited to have a little sister to protect and coddle.

As with the others, Valentina insists on nursing Amelia herself because Amelia came from her body and not the body of some wet nurse. Since it is best for the child, I and the midwife agreed to this. She is in good health and her body is producing the correct amount of milk for the baby. Amelia has an excellent set of lungs and has woken up the entire household with her crying twice already tonight. Even in our own little home at the rear of the property Sergius and I could hear her. I commented on the power of her lungs the last time she woke us up, and Sergius grumbled that he's pleased she's so healthy, contemplated the virtues of moving to the village, and then rolled over and fell back asleep. I believe he's quite glad at the moment that he never had children of his own.

I expect our situation here will continue to improve. Vitus's eldest son, Sabinus, will soon be marrying his childhood sweetheart. I've watched them both grow up, and I am certain the match will be a good one. I wish them luck, many children, and many happy days together.



ART 2430: NON-WESTERN ART

Shiva as Nataraja vs. Mahamaya and Buddha Dakini: A Comparison Study

By Angelina McLaughlin

Shiva as Nataraja vs. Mahamaya and Buddha Dakini: A Comparison Study

ANGELINA McLAUGHLIN

ART 2430: Non-Western Art, Fall 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Sally Struthers

Angelina McLaughlin is a junior in the Mechanical Engineering Bachelor's Program at Wright State University. While a student in a STEM program, she has a deep love for the arts and literature. She has a ten plus year background in the arts community, including playing trombone in the award winning Stivers School for the Arts Jazz Band. She was awarded a Scholastic Gold Key for sculpture and an Honorable Mention for printmaking in the Ohio Governor's Art Competition. Her experiences in the various fields of art and writing aid her in being able to approach engineering problems with creativity and open-mindedness.

Angelina notes:

This non-western art class truly changed my outlook on the world. It made me realize that long ago, people had so many similarities, even though most cultures were completely isolated from each other. People revered the earth, understood the power it held over us, and respected that it controlled our existence, instead of the other way around. The parallels between continents were truly remarkable, and that is something I spoke to in this paper.

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Dr. Struthers notes:

The assignment was to visit the Dayton Art Institute, choose a work of non-Western art, describe it, research it, and compare it to a work of art in the textbook used in class, *Art Beyond the West*. Angelina followed all directions. She wrote excellent descriptions, and researched the pieces using her textbook, materials at the Dayton Art Institute, and scholarly sources. She pulled in several aspects of the works of art: their cultures, their media, their iconography. Her paper was clearly written and well-documented.

Introduction

This paper will consider the sculpture *Mahamaya and Buddhadakini*. This bronze statue can be found in the Asian art gallery of the Dayton Art Institute, acquisition number 1980.12. This art piece will be compared with the bronze sculpture *Shiva as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance*. Similarities and differences will be discussed, as well as their respective religious and cultural meanings.

Mahamaya and Buddhadakini

Mahamaya and

Buddhadakini is a Tibeto-Chinese gilt bronze statue, 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height, made during the Qing dynasty, 18th century. It is currently located in the Asian art gallery of the Dayton Art Institute. Its acquisition number is 1980.12. Mahamaya is a Tantric Buddhist protector Deity. He is typically blue in color and has four arms and four heads, each head



Figure 1: *Mahamaya and Buddhadakini*, source: DAI

crowned with the crown of a Bodhisattva, a person who approached enlightenment and chose to stay on Earth to teach others. The form of Mahamaya shown in the

sculpture is his ferocious Tantric form. In this form, he is shown embracing his consort, Buddhadakini, and in his hands he holds a skull cup, a ritual staff called a *khatvanga*, and a bow and arrow. Buddhadakini also has four heads and arms, and holds the same symbols in her hands (Getty 144). According to the Dayton Art Institute (DAI), Buddhadakini is considered to be Mahamaya's personified female energy force. In this ferocious Tantric form, their embrace symbolizes the spiritual union of wisdom and compassion.

The symbolism of the items helps hold significance to the meaning of the art piece. The skull cup, or *kapala*, is related to detachment and transformation of the observable world. The bow and arrow refer to pointed concentration in order to achieve liberation. The *khatvanga* is far more complex, as noted here:

The shaft of the khatvanga has eight sides which represent the Noble Eightfold path (the fourth Noble Truth) and the eight classes of protectors. At the end of the shaft is a dorje representing totality and completion. Along the shaft of the khatvanga are crossed dorjes, a gTérbum and three heads. The crossed dorjes are symbolic of the indestructibility of beginningless wisdom mind. The gTérbum is symbolic of wealth and enrichment. The three heads – one freshly severed, one rotting and one a skull – are the symbols of the three spheres of being, chö-ku, long-ku and trül-ku [Nirmanakaya, the middle one represents the Sambhogakaya, and the top one is a skull, representing the Dharmakaya] which are unified by the shaft of the khatvanga demonstrating their inseparability. Streamers of

the colours of the five elements hang from the khatvangha, as well as a bell and dorje which represent emptiness and form. At the top of the khatvangha are the three prongs which pierce the fabric of attraction, aversion and indifference. Hanging from the prongs are two pairs of rings. These signify the four philosophical extremes that are denied by Dharma: eternalism and nihilism, monism and dualism. Finally the khatvangha is surmounted by wisdom fire – the fire that burns self-protection, justification and referentiality. (viewonbuddhism.org)

When these ideas are brought together into a cohesive form, one can make the conclusion that was made by the DAI, and many more.

Shiva as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance

This piece is a lost-wax processed bronze figure of the Hindu god Shiva performing the dance of destruction. It was created in the 11-12th century, during the Chola period in India and is 32 inches in height. This figure combines all of Shiva's roles--creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe--beautifully in a single image.



Figure 2: Shiva as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art

Shiva is shown dancing his cosmic dance of destruction. This dance, in which it is written he dances periodically, destroys the universe. A new universe is then created, reflecting the Indian ideas of reincarnation and the never ending cycle of time.

Shiva's hair, normally held in a bun, is shown flying wildly free as he dances. He is shown dancing on a dwarf, the symbol of ignorance, and his lower right hand is raised in a gesture of reassurance (MMA, 46). The ring of fire surrounding Shiva represents the never-ending cycle of creation, destruction, and rebirth of the universe, and the fire shows that this moment is about destruction. In his left outer

hand, Shiva holds a flame, symbolizing destruction, and the left holds a small drum, symbolic of life and rebirth. Shiva's dance also celebrates life as an eternal "becoming" in which nothing begins or ends, and where creative and destructive forces are unified and balanced (Art Beyond the West, 82).

Comparison

The Hindu religion and the Shiva figure both predate Buddhism and the Mahamaya figure. Buddhism had its start in India, so it is common to see Hindu influences in Buddhist art. However, Tantric Buddhism seems to have many more parallels to Hinduism than most other Buddhist sects. Mainstream Buddhism uses only Buddha and some Bodhisattvas as idols shown in Buddhist art. Tantric Buddhism appears to have its own pantheon of deities, many resembling Hindu gods. In these two bronzes, both deities have four arms and hold symbolic items in their hands. Mahayama, having four heads, is reminiscent of Brahma, the Hindu god of creation, whose four heads face the cardinal directions. In *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* it is explicitly stated that Mahayama is a form of Brahma (Getty, 144).

In a cultural context, these bronze figures would be utilized in a similar way. These are both household size deity figures meant to be displayed on an altar with sacrifices given to them. The DAI piece even is hollowed so that sacred Buddhist objects could be stored in the statue to assist with prayers to Mahamaya.

Mahayama and Buddhakinis' embrace is reminiscent of Hindu traditions in art. Hindu art is very open when it comes to depicting intimate relations between

people and deities. This is not as commonly seen in Buddhist art, yet it is very prominent in the gilded bronze piece at the DAI. Finally, in the Shiva piece, one can see that he is standing on one leg, with arms outstretched. This is called the *Tribhanga*, or three bends pose. This pose has been used for centuries in Hindu and Indian art. One can see that both Mahamaya and Buddhadakini are holding the same pose, despite this piece being Buddhist and Chinese in origin.

Conclusion

Despite being made 700 years apart and representing different religions, the Tibeto-Chinese *Mahamaya and Buddhakini* bronze statue shows heavy influence from Hindu Indian art, such as the Chola *Shiva as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance*. The parallels include the additional limbs and heads as well as the use of symbols in the form of objects held by the deity. It appears that Tantric Buddhism is a hybrid of Buddhist beliefs with Hindu-inspired idolatry.

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The Grimké Sisters: Radical Defenders of Women's Rights and Abolition

MEGAN BAILEY

HST 4650: Civil War, Spring 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Drew Swanson

Megan graduated summa cum laude from WSU in December 2015 with a degree in History. While at WSU, she was a member of the History Club, Phi Theta Alpha, and Phi Kappa Phi. Megan plans to attend graduate school.

Megan notes:

My primary reason for completing this particular project was to highlight Sarah and Angelina Grimké's extraordinary accomplishments as 19th century abolitionists and women's rights advocates. By doing so, I hope to draw attention to the sacrificial endeavors and various contributions of lesser known females throughout history.

Dr. Swanson notes:

Ms. Bailey's paper is an excellent piece of undergraduate scholarship. She examines the lives and work of two southern abolitionists, South Carolina's Grimké sisters, in an analysis that limns the importance of gender and religion in opposition to American slavery. She also convincingly argues that the sisters' radicalism ultimately undermined the long term success of their crusade. The essay draws on a solid secondary source base as well as selected writings of the sisters themselves.

When examining the nineteenth-century abolitionist movement from a gender perspective, historians and scholars have primarily focused on the lives and influences of a few, celebrated female characters. For example, abolitionist heroines such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, who authored *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Sojourner Truth have received significant attention and achieved revered status among scholars and non-academics alike. However, few individuals beyond the world of academia have heard of America's first southern, female abolitionists, Sarah and Angelina Grimké. The Grimké sisters, who belonged to the powerful planter aristocracy in South Carolina, were arguably two of the leading female abolitionists of the pre-Civil War era. They authored numerous pamphlets, letters, resolutions, and speeches condemning the evils of slavery and racial prejudice, participated in several anti-slavery conventions during the 1830s, and advocated complete social, civil, and religious equality for African Americans and women. However, despite their early successes as southern abolitionists and pioneers of social reform, the Grimké sisters have remained enigmas in the modern, non-academic world.¹

Historian Gerda Lerner surmises that the reasons for their relative obscurity are undoubtedly related to the nineteenth century bias against unconventional women. Consequently, neither Angelina nor Sarah "was mentioned in the history of antislavery until 1961."² Nevertheless, the Grimké sisters' contributions to the abolitionist movement were strikingly compelling given their

¹ Ellen H. Todras, "The Grimké Sisters," in *The History of Southern Women's Literature*, eds. Carolyn Perry and Mary Louise Weeks (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 72-76.

² Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Woman's Rights and Abolition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 263.

background and personal experience with slavery in the South. However, their impassioned views concerning the evils of slavery and racial discrimination were considered excessively radical by both religious sects and conservative abolitionists throughout the North. Additionally, Sarah and Angelina Grimké's abolitionist efforts in the public arena extended far beyond the rigid domestic sphere that nineteenth-century women were expected to inhabit. As a result, they faced incessant criticism and harassment for daring to speak publicly before "promiscuous" mixed audiences. Despite employing numerous biblically-based arguments to justify their defiance of racial and gender conventions, the Grimké sisters were denounced by various anti-slavery societies and religious organizations for bringing "shame and dishonor" to nineteenth-century womanhood.³ Therefore, the Grimké sisters' radical philosophies concerning racial and gender equality ultimately impeded their long-term participation and effectiveness as abolitionists in the public sphere.⁴

Sarah and Angelina Grimké's radical disillusionment concerning racial inequality originated during the earliest years of their childhood. The Grimké sisters were born into a prominent slaveholding family in Charleston, South Carolina, and were raised on a wealthy plantation during the antebellum period. Their father, Judge John Faucheraud Grimké, was a respected lawyer, politician, and member of South Carolina's exclusive plantation society. As an esteemed and affluent

³ Carol Lasser and Stacey Robertson, *Antebellum Women: Private, Public, Partisan* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 146.

⁴ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 15, 110, 120, 128.

representative of this firmly established social system, John Grimké characteristically owned hundreds of slaves. Thus, the Grimké sisters personally witnessed the evils of slavery as an institution on a regular basis during their formative years. Although most children of slaveholding families eventually learned to accept “the underlying logic of the system,” Sarah and Angelina seemingly refused to conform to that disturbing mentality.⁵ Sarah, for instance, recalled that she often wept and prayed as a child whenever slaves were chastised or mistreated on her father’s plantation. She deplored that slavery was a continual “millstone about my neck, and marred my comfort from the time I can remember myself.”⁶

It is important to understand that Sarah and Angelina Grimké were concurrently aware of the numerous limitations placed on nineteenth-century women. Sarah, in particular, struggled to resign herself to these gender based restrictions, particularly in the realm of education. During the earliest years of her education, Sarah had shown an active interest in learning such masculine subjects as geography, advanced mathematics, and natural science. However, young women were highly discouraged from engaging in such strenuous studies due to the imagined delicacy of their feminine minds and natures. Consequently, when Sarah attempted to convince her father to allow her to participate in her older brother Thomas’s Latin lessons, John Grimké vehemently denied her request. Sarah later voiced her frustrations regarding her inadequate education in a moving essay titled

⁵ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 15.

⁶ Sarah Grimké, in Catherine Birney, *The Grimké Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké, The First Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman’s Rights* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1885), 11, quotation on 11; Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 11-13, 15-16.

“The Education of Women”:

With me, learning was a passion, and under more propitious circumstances, the cultivation of my mind would have superseded every other desire. In vain I entreated permission to go hand in hand with my brothers through their studies. The only answer to my earnest pleadings was ‘You are a girl—what do you want with Latin and Greek...You can never use them.’⁷

Thus, although Sarah and Angelina were educated at one of Charleston’s premier institutions for young women, their studies were specifically designed to prohibit the excessive taxation of their gentle female minds. As a result, both sisters were painfully aware that, due to their gender, their intellectual aspirations had been continuously stifled throughout their youth.⁸

During their childhood and well into their adulthood, Sarah and Angelina Grimké grew increasingly disturbed and saddened by the depraved “system of American slavery” in the South. Their anti-slavery convictions were so deeply embedded that they eventually left South Carolina permanently, “to escape the sound of the lash and the shrieks of tortured victims.”⁹ The Grimké sisters’ intimate knowledge of and personal experience with slavery had profoundly impacted the depth of their radicalism. They had witnessed first-hand slavery’s “demoralizing influences, and its destructiveness to human happiness.”¹⁰ Consequently, Sarah and Angelina departed from their native state in 1821 and 1829, respectively, with the fervent conviction

⁷ Sarah Grimké, “The Education of Women,” in *The Feminist Thought of Sarah Grimké*, ed. Gerda Lerner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 79.

⁸ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 13-14, 16-17.

⁹ Sarah Grimké, “Narrative and Testimony of Sarah M. Grimké,” *Christian Reflector* (1838-1848), May 22, 1839, accessed March 11, 2015, <http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/135927509?accountid=15141>.

¹⁰ Angelina Grimké, in Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 271.

that all African American slaves should receive complete and immediate emancipation. They further adhered to the belief that all individuals, regardless of race, should be granted basic human rights, and enjoy complete social, civil, political, and religious equality. Angelina later defended their radical stance by simply stating that she “had seen too much of slavery to be a gradualist.”¹¹

Although the Grimké sisters were passionately opposed to slavery, their immediate involvement in the northern anti-slavery movement was tempered for several years by a plethora of issues. To begin with, both sisters were ardent members of the Society of Friends in Philadelphia, a religious sect that opposed social activism and public commitment to the abolitionist cause. Additionally, during the nineteenth-century, women were vehemently discouraged from publicly speaking or writing about political matters. Consequently, females who attempted to assert themselves by engaging in the language of abolitionist discourse in the public sphere risked the utter diminution of their distinctive feminine traits, such as modesty, delicacy, and restraint. Thus, Sarah and Angelina’s immediate and open participation in the anti-slavery movement was undoubtedly constrained by these social conventions. However, in the spring of 1835, a dissatisfied Angelina unabashedly defied the Society of Friends and became an active participant in the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Although Sarah originally refused to follow in her younger sister’s defiant footsteps, she too began to grow increasingly frustrated with the Philadelphia Quaker Society’s lack of social activism and

¹¹ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 41, 60, 130, quotation on 130.
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frequent acts of racial discrimination.¹²

Sarah and Angelina Grimké's unintentional and dramatic foray into the public arena of abolition was spearheaded by the controversial activist William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison was a radical abolitionist who had organized the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and founded *The Liberator*, a northern anti-slavery newspaper. Both Garrison and the Grimké sisters supported the immediate emancipation and integration of African Americans, and strongly rejected the beliefs of conservative northern abolitionists who favored colonization and gradualism. In September of 1835, Angelina composed a letter to Garrison "declaring her support of his radical stance against slavery."¹³ In the letter, Angelina revealed her private concerns regarding the pro-slavery and anti-abolitionists riots that were taking place throughout the country. She mused that "[a]lthough I expected opposition, I was not prepared for it so soon—and I greatly feared [the] abolitionists would be driven back...and thrown into confusion." Angelina concluded her letter with an ardent plea to Garrison to stand firm in his convictions. She entreated, "[t]he ground upon which you stand is holy ground: never...surrender it. If you surrender it, the hope of the slave is extinguished."¹⁴ Garrison was deeply moved by the contents of Angelina's letter; additionally, he recognized the value and honesty of Angelina's words and shrewdly discerned that they should be read and admired by a national audience. Consequently, Garrison published Angelina's letter in its entirety in his

¹² Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 78, 80, 82, 91-92.

¹³ Katherine Henry, "Angelina Grimké's Rhetoric of Exposure," *American Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (June 1997): 342.

¹⁴ Angelina Grimké to William Lloyd Garrison, September 1835, in Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 85.

newspaper *The Liberator*, without her permission. Within weeks Angelina's impassioned response propelled her to the forefront of the abolitionist movement and deepened her personal commitment "to the cause of radical abolitionism."¹⁵

During the next three years, Sarah and Angelina Grimké dedicated their lives to the American Anti-Slavery Society and the abolitionist cause. They became intense activists in the public arena, founded the Female Anti-Slavery Society, and produced numerous anti-slavery pamphlets, letters, essays, and resolutions. As a result, they sacrificed familial relationships, friendships, personal safety, and their reputations as genteel women. The religious leaders of the Society of Friends, for example, disapproved of Angelina's published letter and insisted that she recant some of the opinions and sentiments expressed within the letter. When Angelina refused to comply with their demands, the Society condemned her brazen actions and shunned her association. In her diary, Angelina recalled the anguish she experienced at the Society's condemnation. She lamented, "I was indeed brought to the brink of despair," but "tho' I sufferd so deeply I could not blame the publication of my letter, nor would I have recalld it if I could...I felt willing to bear all, if it was only made an instrument of good."¹⁶ Additionally, Sarah and Angelina's shockingly public display of their radical beliefs and abolitionist activities appalled their slaveholding relatives in South Carolina, and eventually resulted in a lifelong

¹⁵ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 78-79, 85-87, quotation on 87.

¹⁶ Angelina Grimké, *Walking by Faith: The Diary of Angelina Grimké, 1828-1835*, ed. Charles Wilbanks (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 212-213.

estrangement between the two women and their family.¹⁷

Angelina Grimké drew further criticism from various sources due to the composition of her infamous “Appeal to the Christian Women of the Southern States.” In her 1836 appeal, Angelina ardently refuted the South’s biblical argument for slavery by examining numerous biblical laws relating to slavery and servitude. Additionally, Angelina daringly entreated her female peers to educate themselves on the subject of slavery and its monstrous evils. By urging them to examine the politics and ideologies behind the institution of slavery, Angelina Grimké fundamentally encouraged southern women to venture beyond the educational boundaries that Western society had predetermined for them. Thus, Angelina brilliantly utilized her public voice to subtly address and criticize deeply embedded beliefs relating to women’s proper roles within American society. Historian Gerda Lerner deduces that although Angelina’s appeal was not necessarily revolutionary in its argument and language, her appeal was distinctly “unique in abolitionist literature because it [was] the only appeal by a Southern abolitionist woman to Southern women.”¹⁸

Unsurprisingly, Angelina Grimké’s “Appeal to the Christian Women of the Southern States” was passionately censured in the South, and hundreds of copies were publicly burned. Angelina was also permanently barred from Charleston and threatened with mob violence, arrest, and imprisonment if she dared to venture

¹⁷ Henry, “Angelina Grimké’s Rhetoric of Exposure,” 343; Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 87-89, 92, 101; Todras, “The Grimké Sisters,” 72-76.

¹⁸ Henry, “Angelina Grimké’s Rhetoric of Exposure,” 348; Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 95-96, quotation on 96.

into the city; subsequently, neither Angelina nor Sarah ever visited Charleston again. Additionally, the Philadelphia Society of Friends responded to the appeal by permanently disowning the Grimké sisters for publicly propagating their radical and dangerous anti-slavery philosophies.¹⁹

Angelina and Sarah Grimké began their abolitionist crusade in the public sphere by speaking to female-only audiences on the subjects of slavery and racial discrimination. During the first few months of their public speaking campaign in early 1837, the Grimké sisters primarily spoke in domestic settings, which included “sewing circles and private parlors.”²⁰ However, as their reputations as southern abolitionists began to grow, the Grimké sisters were invited to speak before increasingly larger female audiences, including the distinguished American Anti-Slavery Society. According to professors Carol Lasser and Stacey Robertson, the Grimké sisters mesmerizing appeal and notoriety were directly correlated to their “intimate knowledge of southern slavery and their skilled oratorical style.”²¹ Angelina’s emotional rhetorical expression, in particular, was remarkably effective among northern audiences and succeeded in rousing considerable public support for the abolitionist cause. Throughout her speeches, Angelina masterfully weaved an unfiltered exposé of slavery in the South while concurrently attacking racial prejudice and inequality in the North.²²

Due to the overwhelming popularity of their lectures, the Grimké sisters

¹⁹ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 98, 100-101.

²⁰ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 94.

²¹ Lasser and Robertson, *Antebellum Women*, 44.

²² Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 92, 94, 107, 109-111.

transitioned from speaking in private homes to lecturing in church sanctuaries and public lecture halls. However, the Grimké sisters' advancements in the realm of public speaking were met with disapproval and protestations by northern citizens and several leading northern abolitionists, including Gerritt Smith. Smith was of the opinion that Sarah's and Angelina's highly publicized demonstrations would negatively impact the overall effectiveness of the abolitionist campaign. Additionally, there were countless northerners who believed that "the idea of a woman lecturing in a church was utterly shocking."²³ Nonetheless, despite the mounting criticism against their obtrusive violation of women's proper roles, Sarah and Angelina "remained undaunted in their struggle" against slavery and racial and gender discrimination.²⁴

An onslaught of additional problems plagued the Grimké sisters during their 1837 New England tour. To begin with, men began attending Sarah and Angelina's abolitionist lectures with alarming frequency in several towns throughout the North, which included Boston, Roxbury, Salem, and Lynn. Furthermore, Angelina had successfully participated in a series of debates against two Massachusetts men who had challenged her statements regarding the mistreatment of slaves in the South. Thus, Sarah's and Angelina's decisions to speak and debate publicly before mixed audiences elicited a firestorm of controversy throughout the North, and produced a plethora of seething reactions from the general public,

²³ Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 107.

²⁴ Elizabeth Ann Bartlett, *Liberty, Equality, Sorority: The Origins and Interpretation of American Feminist Thought: Frances Wright, Sarah Grimké, and Margaret Fuller* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1994), 59-60, quotation on 59; Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 106-108.

conservative abolitionist groups, and various religious organizations. The New England churches, in particular, reacted with open hostility and disapprobation. Their opposition was predominantly attributed to their fervent support of the old Colonization Society. Additionally, they believed that women should remain silent on political matters and refrain from speaking in public. Subsequently, on June 28, 1837, the Massachusetts Congregational Clergy issued a pastoral letter in which they publicly criticized the Grimké sisters for “encourage[ing] females to bear an obtrusive and ostentatious part in measures of reform.”²⁵

Angelina and Sarah Grimké experienced further opposition for speaking publicly from members of their own sex. Catherine Beecher, for example, was a northern abolitionist and reformer who advocated the subordination of women to men, and supported segregation and colonization. In her book titled *An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism with reference to the Duty of American Females*, Beecher severely admonished the Grimké sisters for violating their proper female roles in American society. Beecher fundamentally believed that women “had no business in any public sphere of the antislavery movement,” and should remain within their preassigned domestic and social spheres.²⁶ Angelina responded to her former mentor’s remonstrations by declaring that the denial of a woman’s political rights as an American citizen was a “violation of human rights, a rank usurpation of power, a

²⁵ Lasser and Robertson, *Antebellum Women*, 145-146, quotation on 146; Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 114-115, 118-119, 124-126; Todras, “The Grimké Sisters,” 73-75.

²⁶ Todras, “The Grimké Sisters,” 74.

violent...confiscation of what is sacredly and inalienably hers.”²⁷

The Grimké sisters fervently believed that the subjugation of women was intricately connected to the subordination of African Americans; thus, they adamantly declared that the “denial of our duty to act” in support of the abolitionist cause, “is a denial of our right to act...and if we have no right to act then may *we* well be termed ‘the white slaves of the North.’”²⁸ Thus, in February of 1838, Angelina Grimké transcended the proper boundaries of nineteenth-century womanhood by addressing the Massachusetts State Legislature’s legislative committee on “behalf of the anti-slavery petitions presented by women.” Angelina’s decision to speak before the legislative committee further infuriated the general public; subsequently, the Grimké sisters were skewered by the press and referred to as notorious troublemakers by disgruntled northerners. Soon thereafter, the Grimké sisters abruptly retired from the abolitionist spotlight and retreated into a life of domesticity. Although historians and scholars have furiously debated the cause of their abrupt departure, many agree that the Grimké sisters were exhausted by the challenges they experienced throughout their abolitionist careers in the public arena.²⁹

Sarah and Angelina Grimké utilized their private frustrations and individual experiences as southern women to publicly promote social, political, and civil equality for African Americans and women. However, their roles as female leaders

²⁷ Angelina Grimké, in Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 130; *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 128-130; Todras, “The Grimké Sisters,” 74-75.

²⁸ Angelina Grimké, in Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 114.

²⁹ Henry, “Angelina Grimké’s Rhetoric of Exposure,” 348; Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina*, 114, 155, 161.

within the abolitionist movement were considered highly controversial and ultimately “obscured the remarkable accomplishments of their mission.”³⁰ Additionally, the Grimké sisters’ outspoken critiques of racial and gender inequality alienated them from various religious organizations and conservative abolitionist groups which deprived them of crucial support in the North. Furthermore, there were numerous abolitionists who blamed Sarah and Angelina Grimké for the eventual split in the abolitionist movement because “their actions heightened conflict over leadership” within the movement, and “brought ideological disagreements into open controversy.” Consequently, the Grimké sisters’ revolutionary beliefs regarding racial and gender equality directly challenged America’s prevailing social system and elicited a negative emotional response that undermined the effectiveness and longevity of their abolitionist careers in the public sphere.³¹

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Confederate Delusions: “King Cotton” and the Dream of Intervention

SHANE HAPNER

HST 4650: Civil War, Spring 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Drew Swanson

Shane is a senior majoring in History with a focus on early-modern European history. He tends to focus on diplomatic and political history. He states that this is his first paper “outside that aegis.”

Shane notes:

I’m not fond of American history, and from the start of this project, I consciously made every effort to tie in European perspectives to increase my interest. This required my topic to be economic; however, it is the first paper of that kind I’d written, and it necessitated a use of microfilm sources for the figures I required. This paper, therefore, represents a synthesis of political, economic, and diplomatic perspectives.

Dr. Swanson notes:

Mr. Hapner’s research paper examines the Confederacy’s efforts at cotton diplomacy in France and Britain during the Civil War. Although the subject is a familiar one to historians of the conflict, he managed to find a fresh interpretive angle (an astonishing thing for an undergraduate to do). This essay argues that on the eve of the war a southern economist had artificially inflated European

dependence on southern cotton by cleverly misreading export statistics, and that the resulting report influenced Confederate officials and diplomatic policy. In addition to its novel argument, the paper is well written, logically organized, and grounded in a solid secondary source base. In sum, it is graduate-level work.

In 1858, in the midst of the crisis that was Bleeding Kansas, James Hammond of South Carolina took the floor of the Senate and delivered a pro-slavery speech which would prove to be eerily prescient. As was common at the time, much of the discourse was devoted to reminding the North that the South had shouldered many burdens for the Union and had only been dishonored in the process, but Hammond took his argument further. In fact, Hammond went on to threaten the Union with the dangers of secession in a very unique way: economically.

Hammond's speech has since been termed the "King Cotton" speech, and for good reason. Hammond reminded his northern brethren that the South had bountiful exports which the North could not hope to match—exports that totaled 185 million dollars for the South compared to 95 million for the North—in his estimation. Chief of this export bounty was cotton, a staple to which Hammond fixed nigh-mythic power. "What would happen if no cotton was furnished for three years?" he asked. "England would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her, save the South. No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war upon it. Cotton *is* King."¹

Couched in Hammond's threats were two assumptions which were inherent to most southerners, assumptions that would ultimately be reflected in the Confederacy's foreign policy. Southerners believed that cotton was a trade good

¹ James Henry Hammond, "Speech of Hon. James H. Hammond, of South Carolina, On the Admission of Kansas, Under the Lecompton Constitution: Delivered in the Senate of the United States, March 4, 1858," Washington, D.C., 1858, <http://www.americanantiquarian.org/Freedmen/Manuscripts/cottonisking.html> (last accessed April 2, 2015).

which no industrialized nation could do without, and that the South was the only region on the planet which could produce the high-quality cotton that European mills demanded. As the dominant suppliers of cotton both by weight and quality, southerners were certain that European nations would be forced to support them or risk internal upheaval, and southerners were confident that the latter was a non-option. Europeans would declare war to protect cotton because protecting cotton was tantamount to protecting themselves.

This was the myth of King Cotton, and one source of the Confederacy's false hope, as war with the Union dragged on. Confederates believed they would find eager allies in Europe who would scramble to recognize the Confederate government and mediate the conflict with the North; neither hope would prove true. The Confederacy's trade efforts and foreign policies floundered and failed because the South, as a whole, attached too much importance to their cotton on the world market.

Confederate economic expectations for their nation post-secession were varied but generally tended to be positive. Hammond himself believed that the North had traditionally held a monopoly on direct trade and tariff revenues which had hamstrung the South. In his view, the agrarian South would actually be more economically viable, once independent, compared to a North which would still be reliant on raw materials for manufacturing.² This view was not wholly unreasonable at the time; 1858-1860 had been a boom period which saw southern cotton

² Hammond, "Speech on the Admission of Kansas."
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production grow by 20-30% over the pre-1858 average.³ While this did contribute to southerners overestimating the strength of their economy in the long-term, it also created a great deal of optimism for new Confederates. Their economic expectations were high, and, so too, were their expectations for recognition based on that economic strength.

In many ways, even in spite of an overestimation of their economic might, Confederates had legitimate reason to expect recognition. The Confederacy was one of the only nations on the planet which grew large quantities of medium-staple cotton, a type of cotton which British Member of Parliament (MP) J.B. Smith claimed, “we [Britain] need a far larger supply of... than of any other.”⁴ As it would happen, the Confederacy was very happy to oblige Mr. Smith, and proceeded to produce an overabundance of the material. In 1860, the Confederacy produced 68.75% of all cotton imported by industrialized nations, including the United States.⁵ For that same year, 69.55% of Great Britain’s cotton—and almost all of its medium-staple imports—came from the South, and France received over 90% of its cotton from the South.⁶ If the principles behind King Cotton economics were sound, recognition seemed assured—but were those principles sound?

³ George McHenry, “A Paper Containing a Statement of Facts Relating to the Approaching Cotton Crisis,” 1864, *Confederate Imprints*, Microfilm, 23.

⁴ J.B. Smith as quoted in George McHenry, *The Cotton Trade: Its Bearing upon the Prosperity of Great Britain and Commerce of the American Republics, Considered in Connection with the System of Negro Slavery in the Confederate States* (1864; repr., NY: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 93-94.

⁵ McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*, 59.

⁶ McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*, 50; Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 16-17.

There was a great deal of hope for the Confederacy in King Cotton, but the southern situation post-secession required caution, something the Confederate government never fully grasped. Those who believed in King Cotton almost universally believed that the power of cotton alone, without government interference or encouragement, could force diplomatic recognition. These proponents missed or ignored certain warning signs which indicated that the issue at stake was greater than merely waiting for Britain to collapse into anarchy; from the very beginning, there was a question of whether Britain or France would suffer a cotton shortage at all.

The Confederacy initially failed to recognize that the same cotton boom of 1858-60 which had increased confidence in the southern economy was a double-edged sword. While it had greatly improved the finances of individuals within the Confederacy, it had a damaging effect on King Cotton diplomacy abroad by providing Great Britain and France with a significant surplus of cotton that could last them for several years. King Cotton inherently relied upon the pressures of a cotton shortage forcing recognition but with the reserves that were available to them, Britain and France suffered no significant shortage until 1862.⁷ Failure to recognize the dangers of the cotton surplus would eventually come back to haunt early Confederate attempts at diplomacy with Britain and France.

In the same vein, the 1858-1860 boom also led Confederates to overestimate their production power on the world market. In his 1863 book on the

⁷ Gene Dattel, *Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 2009), 74.

cotton trade, George McHenry, a southern planter and expert on the world cotton economy, listed a series of figures which placed Confederate cotton production in 1860 at 68.75% of total world cotton production.⁸ In his special report to the Confederate Congress one year later, McHenry published averages from the years 1851-1860. These averages are unimpressive alone, but when compared to McHenry's figures for the Confederacy's share of the world cotton market in 1860, they reveal exactly how much the boom shifted perceptions of the Confederacy's cotton dominance. According to McHenry, the Confederacy's average cotton production for the years 1851-1857 was 3,090,943 bales, or approximately 1.42 billion pounds per year. For the years 1858-60 the Confederacy produced an average of 4,061,112 bales, or 1.86 billion pounds of cotton per year.⁹ The world average for cotton production in 1860 was therefore inflated by over 445 million pounds when compared to pre-boom averages; the Confederacy commonly held only 61.62% of the total share, not the 68.75% that the 1860 figures would suggest. Even more damningly, the South lost 26.99% of its gross cotton exports if pre-boom figures were consulted. Southerners who counted on boom-time production as an accurate estimation of the Confederate average grossly overestimated their new nation's power on the market; the Confederacy still exported the majority of the world's cotton supply, but their share of that supply was generally closer to one-half than two-thirds.

⁸ McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*, 59.

⁹ McHenry, *Approaching Cotton Crisis*, 23.

McHenry's analyses unveiled an additional problem, one that Confederates were aware of but generally dismissed: the possibility of new or increased cotton production elsewhere in the world. If southerners thought expansion of cotton cultivation was a serious issue it would no doubt have been considered the foremost threat to the success of the King Cotton strategy, but they largely believed that there was no danger of Britain or France gaining more than a pittance of cotton from new sources. McHenry flatly dismissed the possibility of new cotton growth abroad by arguing that the world market was already saturated. Considering that the Confederacy, the producer of the majority of the world's cotton, was under a Union blockade at the time of his writing, his assertion seems foolish. Nevertheless, McHenry insisted that there was no threat, even if the world was not at market saturation. Rather, he maintained there would be no new cotton production due to labor and land shortages. India, Egypt, Brazil, and Mexico—the four primary producers of cotton aside from the Confederacy—were already producing as much as their land could sustain, and African production was a non-issue, because Africa lacked, according to McHenry, the “directing hand and system of the white race,” which was “absolutely indispensable” for producing cotton.¹⁰

Contrary to Confederate hopes, Britain had been looking into alternative zones of cotton production even before the Civil War, with some success. In January of 1860, British MP Lord Brougham made a speech advocating increased

¹⁰ McHenry, *Approaching Cotton Crisis*, 13-16; McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*, 58.
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cotton production in the British West Indies, as well as along the coast of Africa.¹¹

In the very same session of Parliament, MP Lord Overstone went even further and asserted that it was “a serious matter to have for the supply of [cotton] only a single source,” and suggested that “no efforts [should] be omitted... to promote every rational enterprise for the supply of cotton in every quarter where it could be obtained.”¹² Confederate assertions that cotton growth was at its maximum soon proved unfounded, for British importation of cotton from other quarters, especially India, increased rapidly as the war progressed.¹³

In spite of these difficulties, it must be understood that the Confederacy was still in a strong position when war with the Union broke out. The '58-'60 boom was harmful for the South, both because its overproduction helped to shield Britain and France from cotton shortage and because it encouraged southerners to believe in King Cotton diplomacy unconditionally. Neither of these obstacles was insurmountable, however; the only potential immunity to King Cotton for Britain and France lay in new sources of production, or in convincing the South to sell its cotton. The former took time to implement which the Confederacy could exploit, and so long as the Confederacy was in a stable position financially, the latter was no threat.

Unfortunately for the Confederacy, it was not in a stable financial position. When the South seceded, several states defaulted on their foreign and domestic

¹¹ McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*, 66.

¹² Lord Overstone as quoted in McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*, 67.

¹³ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 174; McHenry, *Approaching Cotton Crisis*, 10.

debts in preparation for the upcoming war, a policy Confederate president Jefferson Davis supported. Further, because the Confederate Federal government refused to levy taxes or repay its debts with the limited amount of specie it possessed, early-war debts were paid by debt-issue loans which were eventually repaid in devalued treasury notes. This policy was undertaken based on the belief that cotton was a better financing method than specie, but the decision backfired for the Confederacy. Rather than serving to bolster finances, the defaulting and renegeing of debt served to create the impression abroad that the South was a mighty nation agriculturally, but a weak one financially. Investors had very low confidence in the South after it defaulted on its state debts and reneged on its initial promises to repay its debt-issue loans with specie. Consequently, the Confederacy had serious issues attempting to secure loans from foreign investors even within the first year of its existence, when it was financially strongest.¹⁴ For King Cotton diplomacy to succeed, then, the South needed to survive the war with its very limited financial capacities while it waited for Britain and France's cotton surplus to evaporate. While this undoubtedly represented a difficult prospect, if the Confederacy could survive the lure of exporting cotton to fund its war effort, King Cotton would almost certainly bring Britain and France to their knees.

As it would happen, however, the Confederate government post-secession was not very disposed to believe anything other than the strictest interpretation of King Cotton. Its only real foreign policy concern was acquiring recognition, in the

¹⁴ Marc Weidenmier, "Gunboats, Reputation, and Sovereign Repayment: Lessons from the Southern Confederacy," *Journal of International Economics* 66, no. 2 (July 2005): 408-411.

hopes that “loans... military and economic assistance, [and] perhaps even an alliance” would inevitably follow.¹⁵ Jefferson Davis and other high-ranking Confederate representatives were not aware of, or chose to ignore, the warning signs associated with King Cotton, and instead chose to buy into the theory unconditionally. They boasted that cotton was not merely King in America, but also in Britain, and that its sway held dominance even over Victoria. This arrogance alienated the audience that they meant to court; British newspapers blasted the Confederacy for thinking that Britain would be so base as to ally themselves with slave owners just for cheaper cotton.¹⁶ The Confederacy had made its first of many missteps in implementing King Cotton as a strategy.

The South’s next error lay in the nature of its diplomatic envoys to Britain and France. Rather than choose qualified diplomats to begin talks, the South sent political appointees, firebrands, and personal friends of Jefferson Davis. These diplomats were decried even in the Confederacy as being some of the worst of what they had to offer in a diplomatic mission; diarist Mary Chestnut called chief diplomat William Yancey a “common creature,” and British consul Robert Bunch claimed that assistant diplomat Ambrose Mann was a “nobody.”¹⁷

The Confederacy committed another blunder immediately afterwards by giving this new diplomatic corps no power to negotiate. Although they were sent to Europe to gain recognition, Richmond believed that recognition was inevitable on

¹⁵ Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 11.

¹⁶ Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 13.

¹⁷ Mary Chestnut and Robert Bunch as quoted in Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 16-17.

the principle of King Cotton and that the diplomats were a mere formality. The Confederate government believed that giving their diplomats negotiating powers might serve to entrap the Confederacy in foreign entanglements from which it would be unable to break free. More than just hindering any real negotiations with European powers, this handicapped diplomatic team revealed something critical to the European powers: the Confederate leadership was naïve to a fault, and clueless when it came to foreign diplomacy.¹⁸

The Confederacy expected that their diplomats would arrive in Britain and secure recognition within a matter of months, but to the British this was just another example of southern arrogance. The Confederacy not only overestimated their cotton's influence on the British state, but also the complex situation in Britain which made Prime Minister Palmerston's government hesitant to enter into a potential war with the Union. Chief among Palmerston's concerns was a potential Union invasion of Canada following recognition, but this was by no means London's only fear.¹⁹ Another serious concern for the British government lay in the potential for French Emperor Napoleon III to run amok on the continent if Britain became involved in the squabble between the Union and Confederacy. While the Confederacy was certain Britain would act speedily, Britain's cotton reserves allowed them to put off making a serious commitment for several years. During this time, the British government gradually came to the conclusion that they would not move without France moving jointly, a policy Britain would stand behind for the duration

¹⁸ Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 19-21, 85-86, 115.

¹⁹ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 177.

of the conflict.²⁰ Recognition had just become that much harder for the Confederacy: they had not only been rebuffed in their initial attempts but now had to convince two powers to recognize them, not merely one.

After several months had passed and the British had continually refused to recognize the Confederacy, the honeymoon period of King Cotton had worn off. Confederates were still convinced that the principles behind King Cotton diplomacy were sound, but that they now needed state control of cotton exports to pressure Britain further. This placed the Confederacy in an awkward position, however; as an ostensibly small-government state which was attempting to establish initial relations with European nations, instituting a legal embargo on exporting cotton would not only violate its principle of state's rights, but also cause a great deal of diplomatic tension with Europe.

The solution to this quandary was a nation-wide voluntary cotton embargo—something Richmond hoped would not be published in European presses while still proving an effective enticement for British intervention. Unfortunately for the Confederacy, this was just another in a long set of false hopes. Confederate planters proved resistant to cooperating with measures that would dig into their bottom-line, and another crack in the embargo emerged when the South was forced to begin using state-owned cotton as a trade material for arms in 1862.²¹ The voluntary embargo did block enough cotton that British and French textile industries came dangerously close to collapsing in late 1862, but soon enough the Confederacy's

²⁰ Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 59-60.

²¹ Weidenmier, *Gunboats*, 411-412; Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 193.

self-imposed embargo broke down.²² What loans the South could float faltered in early 1863, and the Confederacy was forced to lift the embargo and begin using large amounts of state-owned cotton as collateral for loans necessary to the war effort.²³ The voluntary embargo proved to be too little, too late; with the opening of state-owned cotton financing, the dream of King Cotton collapsed.

From the very beginning, the Confederacy overestimated its cotton's importance on the world market. When it came time to be diplomatic, or to use cotton as a bargaining chip, the South believed that the crop would do all the necessary work, and proved highly resistant to taking the steps necessary to make King Cotton diplomacy work. Confederate citizens likewise ignored signs that suggested that King Cotton was not as powerful as they wanted it to be; this included dismissing the possibility of increased cotton growth in regions like India and Egypt, territories which would later prove to be the major suppliers for Britain and France during the conflict. In the end, the Confederacy believed itself to be the world's one vital supplier of cotton, but failed to be diplomatic in its approach, or to make Great Britain and France sympathetic to its cause. The Confederacy was an arrogant and politically difficult nation to align with; consequently, Britain and France opted to find cotton alternatives during the conflict rather than support the Confederacy.

²² Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 174.

²³ Weidenmier, *Gunboats*, 412-415.

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Conflicting Cultural Identity and the Baz

Benin in Edwidge Danticat's *Claire of the Sea*

Light

KELLIANNE RINEARSON

ENG 4470: The New Post Colonial Novel, Fall 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Alpana Sharma

Kellianne Rinearson is originally from Seville, Ohio. She is a senior majoring in English with a minor in Political Science. She is active on the WSU Quizbowl team and the *Fogdog Review*.

Kellianne notes:

With this paper, I wanted to explore the connection between the gang in *Claire of the Sea Light* and the mythology terms they were described with within the novel. This led me to discover their conflicting identities.

Dr. Sharma notes:

In this essay, Kellianne argues that we must extend cultural critic Stuart Hall's concept of Caribbean cultural identity in light of the crisis presented by the Haitian gang culture in Danticat's novel. The Baz Benin do not come from a stable cultural history that would allow them a correspondingly stable cultural identity. Hence, they fall through the cracks, belonging neither to the local Haitian community presented in the novel nor to their American gang counterparts after whom they model

themselves. What is most outstanding about Kellianne's argument is her linking of the Baz Benin and their drug addiction to Haitian mythological figures such as the zombie and to cultural practices such as Voodoo. All in all, I found the essay to be highly original, well written, and very adept in the use of secondary sources.

Considering that Danticat's novel is very recent and still awaits extended study by literary scholars, Kellianne essentially had to create the critical conversation around this text from the ground up, which in itself is no mean achievement.

Conflicting Cultural Identity and the Baz Benin in Edwidge Danticat's *Claire of the Sea Light*

Edwidge Danticat's *Claire of the Sea Light* follows the lives of Haitian residents of Ville Rose and how their lives interconnect. Structured like waves crashing against the shore then retracting, each chapter of the book surrounds a different character at a different point in time that connects to the known information of the story. The book opens with Claire of the Sea Light's birthday and her subsequent running away from the beach where residents are searching for a lost sailor's body. In several series of flashbacks, the relations between characters are revealed as well as the events that led up to Claire running away. Claire's father Nozias recounts his dreams to become wealthier than his fishing profession allows and his interactions with the fabric vendor Gaelle Lavaud, who is interested in adopting Claire. Gaelle narrates her interaction with Nozias and Claire as well as her marriage to Laurent Lavaud and his death and the birth and death of their daughter Rose. Bernard describes his life from the day that his best friend Max Junior leaves for Miami, his interrogation about Laurent Lavaud's murder, and his involvement with the Baz Benin gang before his own death by thugs who were hired by Max Junior's father, Max Senior. Louise George, the local deejay of the show *Tell Me*, later describes her relationship with Max Senior and her show, which most prominently features Flore, Max Senior's housekeeper. Flore becomes impregnated when she is raped by Max Junior. Claire's perspective is finally revealed as she comes to understand her father's intentions to give her to Madame Lavaud and the

events going on in the community before the rogue wave that causes the disappearance of the sailor that began the novel. Throughout the novel, Claire's life is shown to be the common strand of each of the lives of Ville Rose residents. Eventually, the sequence of events is made clearer to reveal just how interconnected the lives of Ville Rose are and how strong their connection is with the sea and with death.

According to cultural critic Stuart Hall, there are two different perspectives on cultural identity: according to the first, cultural identity is defined in terms of unchangeable essence of heritage and shared culture, and according to the second, it is defined by what a person becomes rather than what he or she is born into (Hall 393-394). Within his theory of cultural identity, most cultural identities encompass a mixture of the two types of cultural identity. However, even with these descriptions of two types of cultural identity, Hall does not address the alternate cultural identities that develop from societies without clear cultural histories. Haiti, for instance, has a slavery-ridden history, which caused the decimation of the native population, replacing them with hundreds of thousands of slaves that were deprived of their native culture in an unfamiliar land. Unlike many former colonies, Haiti's population is completely exported; none of those living on the small island are descended from the original native population. Edwidge Danticat's novel presents this problem, especially when describing the gang culture that develops in the town of Ville Rose.

Although the Baz Benin gang members are culturally Haitian, they cannot claim cultural heritage since none of the residents are “true Haitians”; at the same time, the gang culture that is brought from America gives them the expectation to “become” something beyond their identity at birth yet does not provide them with a healthy means of creating a cultural identity. Danticat reflects the gang members’ identity crisis in the use of such mythological terms as “ghosts,” “chime,” and “chimeras” (Danticat 65), all of which describe creatures that are a hybridization of two worlds. Ghosts in many cultures are seen as figures of the world of the living and the dead; similarly, the word “chimera” suggests a hybridization of identities, much like the mythical Greek monster. A less obvious presence of the dual cultural identity of Ville Rose’s gang is their implied role as both *bokor* (sorcerers of dark and light magic in Haitian mythology, notable for creating zombies) and zombie in their supply and use of drugs as well as in their social subservience to the community members of Ville Rose. Although Hall’s definitions of cultural identity see it as being derived from cultural history or being forged through personal achievements, I argue that Danticat’s crafting of the Baz Benin members with roles as both *bokor* and zombie do not fit within Hall’s definitions since they are unable to define their cultural identities as cultural outcasts to the Ville Rose community or to forge their identities as hybrids of American and Haitian gang culture.

In Haitian mythology, the relationship of the *bokor* and their zombie servants is very similar to that of drug dealers and their users both within and outside of *Claire of the Sea Light*. The *bokor* is a sorcerer of both light and darkness. In

a sense, the *bokor*'s main role is to create servants, who, like them, do not have a definite identity. In her essay, "Haitian Zombie, Myth, and Modern Identity," Kette Thomas defines the zombification process in three tiers: "the *bokor* or sorcerer, the community, and the remains of what was once an individual" (5). Essentially, a zombie cannot be created without a sorcerer, a community to allow the sorcerer to perform the ritual, and the remnants of identity a person possesses once they are zombified. These conditions are not unlike those that affect drug users in *Claire of the Sea Light*; for instance, they have to have a provider of drugs, an area conducive to the accessibility of the drugs, and an identity defined by their drug use in order to become fully integrated into the drug culture (Danticat 66). After falling into this loop of drug provider and drug user, the gang members have no chance to create a cultural identity for themselves, having rejected their community's culture and being unable to define themselves beyond what their drug use and crimes have reduced them to.

From the beginning of their lives, the members of the Baz Benin that become transformed into the drug-induced zombies were unable to develop their cultural identity. "The gang members were . . . for the most part, street children who couldn't remember having lived in a house, boys whose parents had been murdered or had fallen to some deadly disease, leaving them alone in the world" (Danticat 65). Being young, the boys who would eventually become gang members did not have a support system or connections to the community, making them more vulnerable to losing their cultural identity. Thomas' definition of zombie as "the altered state of

the creature [reflecting] the loss of ‘the essence of one’s individuality’” (Thomas 4) is a more accurate description of these young members of the Baz Benin, who are unable to choose who they become once they become ensnared by the gang’s culture. Bernard sees the evolution of these unattended youth into zombies through drug use: “Watching these boys drift from being mere sellers to casual users of what they liked to call the *poud blan*, the white man’s powder, watching these boys grow unrecognizable to anyone but one another” (Danticat 66). The source of zombification for the Baz Benin is through their dependence on a powder that originates from a former colonizing power; this fact best follows Elizabeth West’s definition of zombie as “‘the West’s disjunction of flesh and spirit, especially as the concept of zombie grew out of the Haitian-evolved Petro rites as a metaphor for the slave, a person whose soul/psyche has been stolen,’ thus marking [them] as ‘the living dead’” (6). Had they either embraced the culture of their Ville Rose neighbors or forged a new identity from Western culture, the young men would not have become outsiders in their community, and as a result, slaves to their *bokor* gang leaders.

In *Claire of the Sea Light*, the gang members are led by Tiye, who is essentially the main *bokor* of the Baz Benin; he creates zombies out of his associates through drugs and crimes, which separates them from the rest of Ville Rose. Beyond their connections to the drug trade, Danticat provides several scenes that could be interpreted as Voodoo ritual in relation to Tiye and his gang. Many gang members often came into the Dorien’s restaurant for a pre-sex ritual where “they’d

split squab's throat, then let it bleed into a mixture of Carnation condensed milk and a carbonated malt beverage called Malta" (Danticat 62). This ritual is very much a Haitian ritual with African roots, which is similar to rituals attributed to Voodoo. Later in the chapter, Tiye also leads a chant to stir the gang members to action against Bernard's troubles at the radio station (Danticat 71). Within hours of this chanting, Laurent Lavaud is shot, which draws Bernard into Tiye's gang world: "Tiye had named Bernard as the auteur intellectual, the mastermind, of the crime, the person who had sent him and his men to do the job. Bernard was not allowed to speak. He was only meant to stand there, like a menacing prop" (Danticat 73). The descriptions of Bernard in these scenes seem to suggest that, even without being drawn into the drug world, he has become Tiye's zombie to the community. By the time Bernard is released, he is considered such an outsider that his murder is considered "an eye for an eye. Another bandit has been erased from the face of this earth" (Danticat 83). Although Bernard is not a drug user, he is caught in Baz Benin's crime world and zombified by association, preventing him from being able to create a cultural identity for himself or to humanize the gang members through his radio show as he wanted.

Although Tiye and the gang are very much *bokor* to their own members, they also play a subservient role to the politicians and the wealthy businessmen of Ville Rose. In order to be able to thrive in the community as much as they do in Ville Rose, the Baz Benin have to have support from influential members of the town. As West explains, Haitians see zombies as something to be "shunned [rather]

than feared: their lifeless state . . . [a] disconnect from the community and its spirit” (West 5), so if the politicians wanted to, they could easily exile the Baz Benin as outcasts of society. However, these “ambitious business owners as well as local politicians use them to swell the ranks of political demonstrations, gave them guns to shoot when a crisis was needed, and withdrew them when calm was required” (Danticat 65). The gangsters were also used as assassins (Danticat 186). In other words, to be able to stay in Ville Rose, Tiye and the gang have to do what these politicians and businessmen say, or risk eviction. Bernard realizes this after Tiye’s frivolous use of him as a scapegoat is revealed. “One day it might occur to someone, someone angry and powerful, and maniacal—a police chief or a gang leader, or a leader of the nation—that they, and all those who lived near or like them, would be better off dead” (Danticat 80-81). In other words, while Tiye and the Baz Benin have control over their drug-induced zombies, they are themselves controlled by the politicians, without whose patronage they would be shunned. Thus, because of their role as *bokor* and zombies without cultural identities or ties to Ville Rose, the gang’s territorial supremacy is completely dependent on the community.

Gangs function in *Claire of the Sea Light* as both master and slave, neither with a definite cultural identity, using drugs and crimes to enslave while they themselves are being used for political purposes with the threat of eviction or death. Although Bernard tries to humanize the gang members and integrate the lost souls of the gangs back into the community (Danticat 68), he becomes just as much an outcast and zombie as the young boys who are drug users. In turn, the Baz Benin

are also zombies due to their role as servants to the rich and powerful of Ville Rose. If the gang members had not been ensnared in a life of drugs and crime, they might have been able to reintegrate into Ville Rose and become successful members of the community. This outcome would support Stuart Hall's assertion that a solidified cultural identity helps prevent a sense of "otherness" in a community; characters such as Gaelle and Louise provide a positive example of overcoming a reputation as "the other" in the Ville Rose community. However, Hall does not consider what happens when a person is unable to be defined by either their cultural heritage or their potential, which makes the Baz Benin's function as "the other" in a small village like Ville Rose a product of both their circumstances and their choices. Without the ability to determine their cultural identity, the members of the Baz Benin had no chance to overcome their destructive environment in order to reach their full potential as members of the Ville Rose community.

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Empathy in its Entirety

CALLIE REYMAN

ENG 2040: Great Books: Literature, Spring 2015

Nominated By: Dr. Christine Junker

Callie Reymann is from Marysville, Ohio. She loves traveling to see her family in Michigan and Florida. She also likes to travel out west to visit national parks since she loves, and is inspired by, nature. She loves watching mystery series, doing art, and playing with her cat, Mia. She is an English major and intends to further her education in branding.

Callie notes:

I had a very clear vision for this essay. I started writing it early in the morning, poured out my ideas for nearly twelve hours, and completed it later that night. I have never written an essay in that same manner since then. My hope is that people will take away a better understanding of empathy, one that they will value and apply to their own lives. I hope my story inspires others with Asperger's Syndrome.

Dr. Junker notes:

Reymann's essay on empathy and literature blends critical analysis with personal reflection in a way that renders both modes of thinking equally compelling. She pays careful attention to the texts she's discussing (Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of*

Henrietta Lacks and Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*), and she links those texts and some of the key issues in those texts to her own life and her own experiences. Integrating research from outside sources allows Reymann to strengthen her analysis and definitions of empathy, which she then uses to provide a nuanced analysis of literary texts. In addition, her writing is fluid, poetic, and concise throughout the entirety of the essay.

Empathy allows someone to swap places with another person, not literally, but metaphorically. People empathize to problem-solve in social situations, to enter the mind of a character in a novel, and to make a connection by relating to others. Three authors are especially adept in their ability to stimulate empathy for the characters in their novels: Octavia Butler with *Kindred*, Rebecca Skloot with *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and Sherman Alexie with *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. However, some questions arise when empathy is mentioned. How is empathy different than sympathy? In what ways do authors develop empathy? Can empathy be tested since it involves emotion, which makes it subjective? Empathy is a complex concept, hard to measure scientifically and challenging to create in writing, but it's a crucial aspect of society that I've had plenty of personal experience with.

Quite often there is a false perception that sympathy and empathy are the same concept. At first glance their definitions don't sound all that different. Sympathy is described as, "Harmony of or agreement in feeling, as between persons on the part of one person with respect to another: the fact or power of sharing the feelings of another, especially in sorrow or trouble." Empathy is, "The psychological identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another" (Dictionary). In reality they're like two people who look the same and get mistaken for one another all the time, but as soon as they open their mouths everyone knows exactly who is who. Effort and intention are the key distinctions between sympathy and empathy. The distinction can first be seen in the definitions,

when the word vicarious is used for empathy. Vicarious is defined as, “Performed, exercised, received or suffered in the place of another: felt or enjoyed through imagined participation in the experience of others” (Dictionary). The trick with this is visualizing the correct person. Sympathy usually involves people imagining themselves in another person’s situation and leads to the thought ‘how would I react’. Empathy encompasses people stepping outside of themselves, to be the hurting person in the situation and see what they are experiencing in order to better help them deal with it. Sympathy aims to be polite, because voicing condolences for someone going through a hard time is the ‘right thing to do.’ The person struggling is often squeezed uncomfortably in a box. If event ‘A’ has happened to them, then they must feel ‘B’ and can be helped by doing ‘C’ – it’s an impersonal equation that assumes a lot. There’s no dirty work on the sympathetic person’s part to dig deeper and see where the other person is at—emotionally. Notice that the sympathy definition only mentions emotions, while the empathy definition includes the thoughts and attitude of the person being empathized with. On the other hand, empathy psychologically identifies with the other person. Empathy is therapeutic for the one receiving it because the empathetic person is trying to understand their perspective. When someone is empathetic, they disregard any preconceived notions about the person’s condition; instead they ask and listen to how the suffering person is really handling the difficulty. Pain manifests differently for each person, spilling over into every part of someone’s life. It’s not an isolated incident, so it shouldn’t be treated that way. The intention of empathy is to give support or clarification and to understand problems on an individual level. It’s a choice to invest in someone’s life

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and work hard to comprehend it as best as one can. Empathy is caring and being compassionate toward another person.

This other person doesn't necessarily have to be real for someone to empathize with them. Such is the case with characters in novels. Writers aim to make readers emotionally invested in their characters. If people didn't gasp out of surprise, squeal with joy, cry with despair or burst out laughing while reading a book, if they didn't get completely caught up in the otherworldliness of the novel, what reason would they have for reading another one? This attachment likely comes from the amount of empathy a reader has for a character; it makes them feel involved in the novel. The reader becomes enmeshed in the plot by experiencing the situation, done through empathizing with the character, making them care about what happens to the character. The three authors examined here skillfully use an array of techniques to prompt readers to empathize with their characters.

In *Kindred*, sympathy paves the way for empathy, and, as the narrator, Dana influences readers' emotional response to the other characters. Pain is one flagrant aspect of *Kindred*'s text that acts to inspire sympathy. People may not always feel another person's pain, but they do tend to feel sympathetic towards someone who is obviously hurting. Characters in *Kindred* are treated unfairly, verbally abused, slapped, beaten, whipped, raped, tortured and killed. The level of intensity seems to increase as the novel goes on, and the capacity for empathy grows, but not just due to the severity of the treatment. The readers also progressively get to know the characters, their backstories, their fears, their impulses and their wounds – both

physical and emotional. In the scene where Dana is sent to fetch Alice and tell her to go to Rufus or else be beaten, empathy is easier to find. Alice dejectedly decides, “I’m going to him. He knew I would sooner or later. But he don’t know how I wish I had the nerve to just kill him!” (168). The empathy isn’t just there because she has cried earlier, is obviously facing a horrible dilemma, and the reader can tell she’s upset because she wants to kill somebody. The reader empathizes because they know her. They know how many loved ones she’s lost, how she has a rebellious and passionate spirit that tried to escape, and how that fire has been quenched, replaced with hopelessness. At the same time, the reader also feels a little bit of empathy for Rufus, though not as much. Part of this comes from being aware of his reasoning behind treating Alice this way, but part of it comes from Dana’s view towards Rufus and Alice. Dana and Alice are very similar, which makes Dana act kindly towards her. Readers therefore feel more of a favorable connection to Alice. Rufus, on the other hand, has a difficult relationship with Dana, and her uncertain feelings toward Rufus rub off onto the reader. Dana doesn’t completely trust Rufus, she hopes that he can become a better person, and she grows tired of saving him – the readers empathize with Dana in these feelings and with Rufus, to the same extent that Dana does. At the very end, when Dana decides to murder Rufus, she hesitates. Dana still understands Rufus. She admits to it in this scene, “Now he sat with me – being sorry and lonely and wanting me to take the place of the dead. ‘You never hated me, did you?’ he asked. ‘Never for long. I don’t know why. You worked hard to earn my hatred, Rufe.’” (259). Dana feels sorry for Rufus and so does the reader--at least a little. Both wanted to forgive him, but Rufus has done far too many questionable

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wrongs to be saved in the end. Background, paired with the narrator acting as lens, is essential to creating empathy in *Kindred*, and the details behind the people become even more significant in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*.

Rebecca Skloot does an amazing job of slowly coaxing a personal connection from the reader by presenting complex and quirky characters, so the empathy is almost automatic. The people who are the easiest to be empathetic towards are not one-sided, with only one angle, emotion or goal. Take Zakariyya for example. His angry side is present all throughout the novel, understandably due to his abusive past and hard life. However, no one would emphasize with him if that is all there was to him. Zakariyya also has a sweet, childlike innocence to him that just wishes he had his mom growing up. Readers experience glimpses of this when Deborah gives him Christoph Lengauer's picture, "Zakariyya's eyes filled with tears. For a moment the dark circles seemed to vanish, and his body relaxed. 'Yeah,' he said, in a soft voice unlike anything we'd heard that day" (249). He goes on to walk away staring at the photo with a child's admiration; it's such a touching moment. The same event takes place at Dr. Lengauer's lab. After getting the tour and thorough explanation, "Zakariyya reached up and touched Christoph on the back and said thank you. Outside he did the same to me..." (267). In these instances Zakariyya did not get revenge or money but seemed softened and satisfied nonetheless, so those motivations can't be all that he is. On the flip side, Zakariyya could not just be the pathetic, man missing his mom. Once again, people would feel bad for him, but just in a piteous kind of way. It's the combination of the furious

and the tender that make a reader relate to him. This makes sense because people, as a part of humanity, possess the capacity for both good and evil, anger and love, success or despair. Therefore empathy is created when a person is presented as just that, a person. Detail also adds to the tangible, vivid quality of Skloot's characters. Daily life makes its way onto the pages just as often as all of the scientific jargon. The parts that deal with people don't just tell us the facts; they reveal personalities, emotions, backstories, quirks, the pieces that turn characters into people. Why is it important to know that Deborah hits people with her cane for emphasis? These details, seemingly insignificant to the plot, are what give us a sense of reality. We are not just hearing a tale, we're experiencing a life. Why include anything to do with Skloot's excursions? Because if the novel didn't, then Deborah would just be a name on a paper, and the family would just be a sad story, and this book would only serve as an interesting report. The 'behind-the-scenes' focus Skloot takes allows the reader an intimate perspective into the workings of the Lacks' environment that makes everything in it more captivating and the people worth an investment of our attention and emotion. Though Skloot enables readers to empathize with a tough character, Alexie shows people just how easy it is to empathize with an honest, quality character.

In *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* Alexie introduces the reader to a courageous and humble spirit. Arnold's self-deprecating humor and willingness to fight against adversity make him a kid that any reader can empathize with on some level or another. Alexie presents us with a character that has never had an easy

life, and the reader meets him when it gets even more difficult. He also gives us someone whose characteristics can be admired. Arnold combats the bad luck with a good attitude, often resorting to joking at his own expense in order to cope. Take this explanation for example, “I also had a stutter and a lisp. Or should I say I had a st-st-st-st-stutter and a lissssssstththththp. You wouldn’t think there is anything life threatening about speech impediments, but let me tell you, there is nothing more dangerous than being a kid with a stutter and a lisp” (4). With descriptions like this one, Arnold becomes someone readers want to get to know. He is funny, honest, humble, and he doesn’t take himself too seriously. Nothing kills empathy like arrogance, and Arnold fosters our literary friendship with him because he is modest and therefore likable. He tells everyone about the challenging times in his life in a way that’s accurate, that truly gets the picture across, but is also tinged with sarcasm --sarcasm that can lighten the mood or dig deeper into the injustice that surrounds his life. Arnold also faces adversity head on. He doesn’t shy away from leaving his tribe behind and facing scrutiny, in the name of having a better education. He doesn’t back down from playing Rowdy head-on in basketball, possibly getting crushed again, to prove he is stronger and braver than everyone else thinks. People can empathize with those who challenge the troubles that are stacking up against them because they’ve probably had to do the same, or wish that they would. Readers are encouraged and feel like Arnold is empathizing with them, telling their story. They’re on the same page. Arnold is also a round character, one that develops as the story goes on, and readers can root for his growth along the way. Throughout the story Arnold retains his amiable personality, but, by the end, readers get the

feeling that he is starting to learn how to manage the two halves of his life. Arnold makes new friends at Reardan, while reconnecting with Rowdy. He had a teacher who supported him on the rez, and now he has a coach that reassures him out on the basketball court. He loses many loved ones, but manages to not lose himself. He is at peace with his decision and will go on to be great. Readers can empathize with Arnold because he is a character worthy of being empathized with. Empathy is considerably challenging to stimulate in writing, but it is far harder to measure in science.

Empathy is extremely hard to measure due to its emotional and subjective nature, but one test has worked hard to produce viable results. As Simon Baron-Cohen and Sally Wheelwright remark, “Empathy is an essential part of normal social functioning, yet there are precious few instruments for measuring individual differences in this domain” (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 163). However, these researchers have designed a self-reporting questionnaire that rather than measuring IQ, looks at the Empathy Quotient or EQ (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 163). The questionnaire contains various items that participants can strongly agree, slightly agree, slightly disagree or strongly disagree with, for a possible total score of 80. When it comes to empathy in research, there is a bit of a divide. Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright acknowledge that both aspects of empathy are important as they clarify, “Researchers in this area have traditionally fallen into one of two camps: theorists who have viewed empathy in terms of affect, and those who have taken a more cognitive approach” (163). Affective theorists focus on an empathetic person’s

emotional response to the other person and take into account how appropriate it is, whereas cognitive theorists emphasize the level of understanding for the other person's feelings (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 164). The article described this type of empathy as, "Setting aside one's own current perspective...then inferring the likely content of their mental state, given the experience of that person" (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 164). At a basic level it's the difference between reacting and understanding. Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright felt that these two facets of empathy were too closely intertwined to separate in their EQ questionnaire, so they are co-existent in each item (166). There have, in fact, been other empathy tests, but many of them contained psychological flaws. These tests (Chapin Social Insight Test, Rating Scale, Empathy Scale, Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy, and Interpersonal Reactivity Index) were often too broad, meaning that empathy was not the only personal factor or social skill being examined (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 165). Even this empathy test has areas where it can become more accurate and thorough. In the future researchers hope to include a loved one's evaluation to the questionnaire results (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 171). There is also the matter of the participant's personal well-being while taking the test – empathy is so subjective. If someone is in a drunken state, if they're angry or depressed, or if they possess certain personality traits are all factors that could affect how they respond to the items (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 171). It seems that there is always some loophole for subjectivity to creep into and muddle up the results. The EQ test has results specifically for people who have Asperger's Syndrome (AS), otherwise known as High Functioning Autism (HFA), versus

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average adults; and results for empathy in terms of gender. The Asperger's experiment showed that the disorder is an empathetic deficiency. 81% of AS or HFA subjects had a score of 30 or lower, while the others had 12% with the same range (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 163). As for the gender experiment, women scored significantly higher than men: only 4% of women scoring 30 or lower compared to 14% of the men, twice as many women scored 54 or higher and over three times as many women scored 62 or higher (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 170). However, even these numbers can be questioned. As Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright explain, "Whether this reflects women's greater willingness to report empathetic behavior or their higher levels of underlying empathy cannot be determined from this study" (170). Social stigma socially enforced on men could cause them to feel it's 'unmanly' to be empathetic. Although it is difficult, empathy can be assessed, but can it be learned?

If empathy cannot be learned or improved upon, then I am a living abnormality. At the age of three I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. Unlike the more prevalent type of autism that deals with learning and physical related challenges, Asperger's is based on social behavior and emotional response. As Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright further explain, "Autism is diagnosed when an individual shows abnormalities in social and communication development in the presence of marked repetitive behavior and limited imagination" (166). In relation to empathy, I naturally possess little to none of it. I am notorious in my family for shutting down a conversation with a sharp remark if it doesn't relate to, or interest,

me. My mom refers to this act as being rude, but she means that I am not giving someone my attention and heart. The researchers expand on this phenomenon, “...even though they report they have difficulty judging/explaining/anticipating or interpreting another’s behavior, it is not the case that they want to hurt another person” (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright 169). I’m not trying to discount a person when I react impolitely; I’m just naturally more self-focused. Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright make the distinction between AS, which struggles to handle emotions and psychopaths, who are unfeeling and cannot take the EQ test since they are notoriously deceitful (Self reporting) (169). When I was little my psychiatrist would make faces at me, a smile or frown for example, and ask me what he was feeling. I gave him a blank stare and told him I had no clue. Having been diagnosed years before most people with AS, I’ve used the time to learn to recognize and connect with other’s emotions. Yet, even now that translates to sympathy most of the time. It’s a huge struggle for me to step outside myself and listen to another person’s hardships. I’m especially lacking in empathy when I’m tired, my empathy ebbs away with my energy. Despite these hardships, I have come a long way in my ability to empathize and will continue to improve. Empathy is something that requires practice by pausing in a situation to navigate the proper way to react to it. It’s also a crucial element in social communication.

Empathy is an essential part of life for anyone who plans on interacting with humans. Some people might think my condition would make me relate to un-empathetic people. In an ironic twist of fate, I don’t empathize with people who

don't empathize. Empathy is a choice and a decision. I worked harder than most people to develop this skill and scorn anyone who dares to ignore their innate ability. Empathy is so vital to society, yet in modern times it seems to grow more and more absent. Culture is too self-focused. Everyone is individualistic in the way that they experience and react to events, no one can walk in their shoes, and that makes them unique, but also lonely. However, as long as someone is walking beside them acting as a guide or sounding board, they are not the only one on their difficult journey. People also require a sense of worth and validation that comes from the attentive listening on the part of an empathetic person. Someone cares about them enough to try to understand their state of mind; therefore they matter in the world. Perhaps if empathy were practiced more, then people would feel reconnected to the world and one another.

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The Distribution of Globalized Power

RACHEL CANTER

URS 2000: Growth and Change in Urban Society, Spring 2015

Rachel is in her sophomore year at Wright State. She is majoring in English Literature and French Language. Books have been her passion ever since Harry Potter stole her heart eight years ago. After graduation, she hopes to enroll in graduate school and write a novel, or run off to Miami and start a juice bar—time will tell.

Rachel notes:

As I wrote this paper, I hoped to create something thoughtful and interesting. I wanted my essay to reflect the fascination I had felt upon learning of the complexities of the globalized world we live in. I hope that those of you who read my paper find the same interest in the world of global power and politics that I did.

Dr. Jeong notes:

Ms. Canter induces from Thomas Friedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* the discrepancy between the rhetoric of globalization as the process of building a harmonious multicultural global society and the political economy of globalization as the process of integrating national economies into a hierarchical global chain of command. To resolve the discrepancy, she presents an alternative worldview for a multipolar global society through culturally sensitive regional integration.

In his book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman discusses a multitude of issues and benefits that have sprung from globalization. He addresses the proliferation of technology and how it has brought free information to people that previously lived in isolation; he additionally discusses how technology and the end of the Cold War have opened new investment options for average people. But in the midst of his argument for globalization and the democratizations it has brought, Friedman seems to take a step backward. He claims that the United States is the only superpower nation, and is therefore responsible for regulating the globalization system (Friedman 2000, p. 463). However, this superpower hierarchy seems to be antithetical to the very concept of globalization.

Friedman establishes his claim through citing the collapse of the Cold War system, saying that capitalism has triumphed (Friedman 2000, 104). The U.S. is a very successful capitalist nation that allows the market to regulate and grow its economy (Friedman 2000, 104-106). There is additionally the compelling argument of the very principles America is founded on; this is the information age, the world without walls, and the U.S. has been advocating for maximum personal liberties since its founding (Friedman 2000, Chapter 4). Thus, America is in an ideal position to succeed in the globalization era. But Friedman goes a step further and asserts that the power that comes from American success in globalization ought to be used to invest in global coalitions such as the IMF, NATO, and the UN; not only do these alliances benefit developing countries, but they also amplify American power, making America the superpower that monitors the rest of the world (Friedman

2000, 466). This worldview is a rather rigid one; it states that there must be an overarching global power that in some capacity guides all of the lesser powers (Friedman 2000, 463).

But, a hierarchical structure hardly seems in line with the sentiment of globalization. The world is open; technology allows people in all sorts of places to understand how the others live (Friedman 2000, 67-69). This understanding contributes to the evolution of diverse cultures; people have the power to collaborate through technology in order to change their society for the better (Friedman 2000, 209). The walls are breaking down and the geo-political status of the world ought to reflect that. The age of globalization requires a more fluid view of international power than Friedman is offering. World diversity should be celebrated in a way that doesn't have one specific nation as the leader of the rest. Friedman actually makes a strong case for the value of openness and diversity when he cites the American Immigrant experience (Friedman 2000, 228). This sentiment of embracing the varied qualities that distinct individuals have to offer should be applied to the globalization system in a way that reflects the complexity of the era rather than oversimplifying it to a superpower structure.

The U.S. is certainly a powerful nation. But other nations have creativity and passions that add to global society. If we smother them with a worldview centered on the virtues of the U.S., then we will certainly impede global progress through (ignorantly) assuming their weakness. There is a great amount of power swelling from Asia and the Middle East. This power includes the rising Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). This project is led by the Chinese with members from developed and developing, eastern and western, nations. Its goal is to foster growth and development in Asia. This kind of economic power mirrors that of the IMF, headed by the United States, showing that China has become a strong shaping force in the world. Additionally, there are nuclear programs in Pakistan, Iran, Russia, etc. This is a signifier of the military strength in those nations; if they wanted to start a nuclear war they could. And although it seems generally agreed upon that a nuclear war is the last thing the world needs, it is still significant that there are multiple nations that have nuclear programs. Nuclear arms are a way of showing strength, and the nations that possess these arms should not be underestimated as secondary powers, abiding under the shadow of the sole superpower.

The world has changed very rapidly in the past twenty years. This is one thing that Friedman articulated very adamantly in his book, and it seems rather indisputable. However, with such a changed world, with such an interconnected world, it is indispensable to treat it so. There cannot be only one superpower because there is too much power spread throughout the world to really justify the idea that there could be an overarching force that guides the rest of the world. Thus, we must look at the globalized distribution of power as the more loosely defined dispersal of influence that it is. We must see the strengths of a diversity of nations and take them into consideration as we assess the state of the world.

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The Golden Straightjacket is out of Style

LACEY GERMANA

URS 2000: Growth and Change in Urban Society, Spring 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Hyeseon Jeong

Lacey Germana is a Psychology major in the College of Math and Science. She is a passionate student and a proud mother. All her goals include bettering herself and helping others. Her gifts to share are, creativity, compassion, and empathy.

Lacey notes:

The purpose of this paper was to challenge the current state of capitalism and to add perspective to the unsustainable nature of the profit motives behind it. This paper and assignment helped teach me the importance of progressive change.

Dr. Jeong notes:

Ms. Germana induces from Thomas Friedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* the discrepancy between the rhetoric of globalization as the process of building a harmonious multicultural global society and the political economy of globalization as the process of integrating national economies into a hierarchical global chain of command. Her review well summarizes the main argument and logical framework of Friedman's book and responds to it with bold but thoughtful critique.

To be utterly honest, I found Thomas Friedman's, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* to be an incredibly superficial and biased portrayal of the phenomenon of Globalization. His shallow, capitalistic views, along with the outlandish amount of name dropping and bad analogies, continuously disappointed me throughout the book. I found many points of this book to be unsupported, egotistical and just down-right, wrong. Friedman's "all or nothing" views on globalization and free-market capitalism are conceptualized solely from an Americanization type perspective, totally lacking a *globalized* point of view.

After reading Friedman's interpretation of globalization, I felt like Friedman's main objective was to shove Western outlooks down his reader's throat. I got the vibe from Friedman that he was trying to convince his readers that everyone needs to ditch their "olive trees" and jump in their capitalism fueled "Lexus." If you don't, then you might as well forget about your significance, or survival, in the world as we know it. All Friedman's opinion translated to me was, hey everybody, let's just homogenize the entire world into one big America. It's the *only* thing that will work. I found this to be entirely unrealistic and unsustainable. Ultimately, I'd like to make a broad stance and argue against Friedman's clearly pro-globalization and pro-capitalistic views. Throughout the book, I felt an arrogant tone from Friedman that tended to *glorify* the phenomenon of globalization and the capitalistic market and shame any nation that decided to follow another path. I felt that Friedman failed to capture the realistic nature of the *negative consequences* of globalization. I would like to use this essay to argue against some of Friedman's

pushy, adoring attitudes towards globalization and explain why I feel that every nation does *not* need to be pressured to put on this so-called “Golden Straightjacket” that Friedman so heavily pushes as a necessity in Chapter 5. Though there are a vast array of cons associated with globalization and the free-market, I’d like to focus solely on the economic, ethical and environmental factors.

One of the most predominant cons associated with globalization is undoubtedly the rising trend of unequal distribution of wealth. In Chapter 5, Friedman makes the claim, “When it comes to the question of which system today is the most effective at generating rising standards of living, the historical debate is over. The answer is free-market capitalism” (Friedman, 1999, p. 86). In my opinion, this remark *only* applies to wealthy nations, including America. I’d like to argue that free-market capitalism only sets the stage for an even larger disadvantage for developing countries, simply because they are unable to compete with the “big guys” in the even playing field that globalization generates. This, ultimately, continuously perpetuates inequalities, allowing the rich to be richer and the poor to be even poorer. Even if a developing, free-market nation begins turning out skilled or educated people, those skilled workers are more likely to migrate and work in a more developed and wealthy nation, with more job opportunities. Friedman’s cheerleader attitude on this issue just seems greedy and morbid. I cannot help but think he is severely lacking any sort of empathy or compassion towards the people who are unmistakably suffering from the consequences of globalization and capitalism. I feel that Friedman is just so gung-ho on the capitalistic ideology that *he*

may be prospering in, that he fails to realize that it is not in the best interest for the *entire* world. This leads me to my ethical reasoning.

Another negative side effect of the free-market and globalization is the amount of exploitation that more underdeveloped nations are undergoing at the expense of wealthy corporations. A good example of this would be outsourcing. In many of these outsourcing situations, big corporations use this as an excuse to take advantage of other countries by using their workers as cheap labor, which usually involves neglect of safety regulations, inhumane working conditions, and child labor. All of these horrific circumstances seem unimaginable to the everyday American and maybe that's why there seems to be this illusion that capitalism is superior. It seems to be a bad case of, out of sight, out of mind. According to Friedman, free-market capitalism is the only rational solution, but what logical sense does it make to settle on a system that is so flawed and devastating to so many? Just because some people cannot literally see the inhumane standards that capitalism and globalization perpetuates, does not mean that we need to pretend it's not happening. It is simply immoral.

Not only is globalization and capitalism affecting a large number of people in a negative way, it is also reaping havoc on our environment. How is it even remotely plausible to think that the entire world can live as aggressively capitalistic consumers and still be able to sustain a healthy environment? I believe that many highly urbanized and capitalistic societies have begun having a serious disconnect with nature. In Chapter 10, *The Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention*, Friedman

uses the unnatural company of McDonald's as a symbol of peace that has been brought about by Globalization. I happen to have an entirely contrasting perception of McDonald's. Rather than symbolizing peace and war-free zones, I find the spreading of McDonald's to be a great representation of greed, unsustainability and disconnect. Rather than praising the spread of companies that are selling toxic, unnatural products, I would like to point out the extreme volatility and danger that the selfish habits of some major corporations are using. The strain that most large corporations put on the environment is downright alarming. The amount of consumption that a capitalistic society uses will be the end of the earth as we know it, unless we find a more sustainable solution that allows us to reconnect with the earth. Global warming and climate change should be priority over profit, and the current capitalistic and globalized world we live in today will not preserve this wonderful planet we live on. A very wise Indian environmental and anti-globalization activist named Vandana Shiva (2016) said, "It is not an investment if it is destroying the planet." I find those words to be much more enlightening, encouraging, and consciously aware than Friedman's ever will be.

I believe that there is a system out there that will create a wonderful sense of *balance* between achieving a fulfilling standard of living that is also innovative and comfortable while still being consciously connected to the earth and all of the people who reside here. I do not believe that the current state of globalization and capitalism is the system of the future, rather just a system that we will look back on one day and shake our heads at. Maybe instead of everyone conforming to the

“Golden Straightjacket,” we should all find a system that will allow the *entire* world to thrive and benefit, rather than just a select few.

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In Search of God's Path

ANN BRAKE

CST 232: Nonwestern Religions, Spring 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Sharon Showman

Ann Brake is a writer, dancer, and student. She discovered a passion for education at an early age and hopes to be a lifelong seeker. She is currently a sophomore at Wright State University.

Ann notes:

Writing "In Search of God's Path" was a journey for me. Learning about Eastern religions challenged my faith, my intellect, and my western mindset. Writing about this experience, particularly my exploration of Sikhism, helped me understand not only my thoughts and feelings on Sikhism but also my wonder. I am filled with awe at the peace, joy, and unique personal benefits each religion offers to its followers, and I hope readers will share my wonder as they share this small part of my journey.

Dr. Showman notes:

Ann's paper is an assigned reflection on Sikhism. A reflection paper seeks to combine academic content with a student's personal response to what is being studied. It is to be a well-constructed academic paper, but it permits personal insights, questions, responses, observations, and experiences on the part of the student to be included in the paper. Ann's paper is exemplary in that it is able to convey important information about Sikhism from not only an academic

perspective, but from a personal one as well. The energy and flow of the paper
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builds throughout the paper until reaching the conclusion that this religion may not be like all others in ways that are important for the student. Her ability to creatively describe what she is feeling as she encounters the major tenets of Sikhism makes the paper not only enjoyable to read, but important in that it offers to the reader an opportunity to understand a student's journey in dealing with something completely foreign to her previous thinking.

In Search of God's Path

Eastern religions will always find a way to surprise those fortunate enough to study them. In my studies of Eastern religions, I had grown accustomed to a range of religions that were typically polytheistic, encouraged meditation or yoga, and taught followers to seek unique paths to enlightenment. Just when I thought I had Eastern religions defined in those few words, Sikhism arrived to correct me. As a unique reaction to both Islam and Hinduism, Sikhism reminded me how dynamic and very beautiful Eastern religions are, and how predictably silly it was of me to try to predict an Eastern religion.

As the youngest religion in India, it should have been obvious that Sikhism would be different; the youngest sibling in any family tends to be the most colorful (Morgan 305). Sikhism emerged from the ideas of a man named Nanak whose life was marked with miracles and strange ideas from the very start; such is the way of men who start religions. Nanak lived in proximity with both Muslims and Hindus, and he believed the right path was God's path, rather than the paths set out by either religion (Morgan 306). Nanak taught his followers that God's path was one of selfless service to others and recognition of God's presence within oneself and others (Morgan 312). This cornerstone of Sikhism was quite agreeable to me; as a survivor of multiple Christian church splits, I have often pondered why seemingly religious people dedicate themselves to personal pursuits rather than God's work. In my experience, religious people selfishly pursued control of church events and worship services simply for the sake of being in control. Reading of, and learning

about, a religion that is focused on God's path--rather than what God can offer one--gave me hope that some people still seek God before personal gains even if some of those people have religious beliefs that differ greatly from those with which I have been raised.

Though Sikhism is an Eastern religion, and thus has few similarities with the Christianity I was raised under, Sikhism felt strangely familiar to me. Sikhism felt like a family friend I had known as a child and not seen for many years: familiar yet alien. I credit this to the influence of Muslim religious beliefs in Sikhism. Sikhs are strictly monotheistic, and daily devotion to God is important (Morgan 312). Community involvement, whether it be community service or frequenting local Sikh temples, is also a highly valued aspect of Sikhism (Morgan 313). Though Sikhism differs from other Eastern religions because of its monotheism, I found familiarity in Sikhism through its ties to Islam. These ties to Islam did not diminish Sikhism's existence as an Eastern religion, however. Sikhism also has ties to Hinduism, a religion which, in the simplest of terms, challenged my direct, Western way of thinking until I felt nothing but wonder. Sikhism shares the Hindu worldview, belief in reincarnation, and an awareness of God's consciousness in each person; this awareness dances a fine line between recognizing Godliness and acknowledging the divinity in all (Morgan 312).

Finding similarities between Sikhism and the religions I was more familiar with did not save me from my initial surprise, however. Sikhism's monotheism among Eastern religions that are commonly polytheistic continues to puzzle me

even as I write this. I am amazed by how a monotheistic religion sprang from the tangled roots of Hinduism. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born into a Hindu caste, but his Hindu upbringing was juxtaposed with the instruction of a Muslim tutor and the proximity of both Hindu and Muslim peers (Morgan 306). After a divine encounter, Nanak told his people, “There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim” (Morgan 306). Surely he must have been accused of madness. I find myself wondering if Nanak faced ridicule from family, friends, and community members. Nanak may have overcome any ridicule with the support of the female converts to Sikhism. Women specifically may have been drawn to Sikhism for a feature of its teaching rarely supported in other religions.

Sikhism teaches gender equality.

When I read that Sikh teaching heavily emphasizes gender equality, my feminist heart gave a squeeze of disbelief and delight. I had previously viewed contemporary religions as twisted and reinterpreted by mankind until women no longer had a place in them, and I felt a creeping sense of alienation in the face of religion. Sikhism restored my faith in women’s place in religion with the seemingly simple belief in gender equality: “Amar Das [a Sikh guru] strongly believed in the equality of women, and of his 146 major disciples, fifty-two were female” (Morgan 308). Here, at last, I learned of a religion that is not used to oppress, manipulate, control, or shame women on either a personal, religious, or societal level. I could barely believe it. According to Diane Morgan, Sikhs “... denounce the caste system, sexism, racism... and religion-based vegetarianism” (313). This belief can easily be

found in the Sikh *kehalsa*, which is the Sikh brother- and sisterhood. Both men and women are expected to join the *kehalsa* when they are ready (Morgan 314). Gender equality can also be seen in the way Sikhs dress. All Sikhs are expected to dress modestly, and, though men who have been initiated into the *kehalsa* must wear a turban, there are no gender-punitive restrictions on clothing for men or women (Morgan 313). Learning this in the aftermath of spending two weeks in a women's studies class studying how religions are used to oppress women was a delightful surprise.

The interesting surprises did not stop with the Sikh belief in gender equality. Sikhs strive to be released from the cycle of reincarnation and to be united with God (Morgan 313). Though the belief in reincarnation is far from unusual in an Eastern religion, the Sikh approach to being free from reincarnation is unique; Sikhs believe they will be freed from reincarnation with faith, prayer, and righteous living (Morgan, 313). Asceticism and meditation are not a means to reach freedom from reincarnation; Sikhs do not practice traditional forms of asceticism. Instead of going hungry or living without clothing and shelter, Sikhs strive to live purely while surrounded by an impure world (Morgan 307). This version of asceticism seems far less intimidating than some forms of Buddhist or Hindu asceticism; as a food lover, I never could bear the idea of living on breadcrumbs and water. My stomach always twists in sadness and hunger at the thought.

Another aspect of Sikhism that was a source of fascination to me was Sikhism's complete lack of idols. Because of Sikhs' strong monotheism, they have

no minor gods, idols, statues, or saintly figures in their temples, homes, or religious ceremonies. Sikh temples occasionally have paintings of the ten Sikh gurus, but these paintings and the religious figures depicted are never a source of worship (Morgan 312). The images of the gurus serve only as sources of inspiration to live pure and righteous lives.

Sikhism's monotheistic center feeds into a belief in exclusive truth I find singular among the Eastern religions I have learned of thus far. Hinduism has many deities, and worship of those deities is highly individualistic. Buddhists may worship any deities they choose, or none at all, as long as they continue on the Eightfold Path. Tantra has little to do with deities. Taoism is all about following the flow of life, even if one's personal flow may involve unique approaches to truth. All of these Eastern religions allow some wiggle room for believers to pursue a unique path and system of worship. Sikhs, however, must not believe in any other religions and the associated doctrines (Morgan 312). Fortunately, this belief has never lead to any Sikh Inquisitions or Sikh Crusades against nations of other religions. Though Sikhs believe their religion is the true path to God, Sikhs respect and value the beliefs of all, and they do not actively try to convert people to Sikhism (Morgan 316).

Awe has followed me every step of my journey to understand Sikhism. As a reaction to both Islam and Hinduism, Sikhism taught me that Eastern and Western religious ideas, no matter how contradictory at first glance, can be beautifully woven together. Rather than intimidate me with a violent past and a strict set of beliefs, Sikhism has inspired me with a nonaggressive past and a liberating set of beliefs. I

have found not only surprises and joy in the teachings of Sikhism, but also enrichment of my personal faith. Sikhism has taught me to find the truth of a religion, not what I am told by men to believe of a religion. As I move on to studies of other religions, I leave with a fulfilling purpose Sikhism revealed to me: finding God's path in my life.

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A REFLECTION ON *GOD AND SEX: WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY SAYS*

by Michael Coogan

HOWARD WAGNER

REL 2040: Great Books: Bible and Western Culture, Fall 2015

Nominated by: Dr. Sharon Showman

Howard Wagner is a junior majoring in Organizational Leadership. He grew up in Coldwater, Ohio and intends to pursue a career in Human Resources.

Howard notes:

This writing opened my eyes to the extreme difference in culture between the ancient Israelites and modern day society. I hope this work allows for the audience to explore their own explanations of the Bible and allow for personal growth.

Dr. Showman notes:

Howard's paper is an assigned reflection on a book that is chosen by the student from a list of recommended titles, which is offered in addition to the textbooks for the class. A reflection paper seeks to combine academic content with a student's personal response to what is being studied. It is to be a well-constructed academic paper, but it permits personal insights, questions, responses, observations, and experiences on the part of the student to be included in the paper. Howard's paper is exemplary in that he is able to acknowledge, confront, and reconcile important academic information which clashed with, or informed what, he had been previously taught about the Bible. This is sometimes hard for students to do especially for those coming from strong family backgrounds with a non-negotiable religious foundation, but Howard is able to achieve this through an honest appraisal of his lack of academic understandings of the Bible, humor, and a sense of personal clarity that does not religiously frighten him, as much as it informs his quest for knowledge. He is also able to embrace that spiritual faith is an ongoing process of refinement, as opposed to something that is set in stone. Howard's writing has grown stronger over the course of the semester. He has worked hard on his writing skills and this submission is evidence of a student who has benefited from an integrated writing course.

A Reflection on *God and Sex: What the Bible Really Says*
by Michael Coogan

Throughout my life and interaction with the Catholic faith, I had always seen the Bible as the Word of God, speaking a message that was cut and dry. However, after participating in The Bible and Western Culture class and reading a variety of biblical texts, as well as Michael Coogan's *God and Sex: What the Bible Really Says*, it became clear to me that everything was not as simple as it had once seemed. During my childhood and throughout my adult life, the Bible was only ever taught to me from a single perspective. This perspective, while providing me with a set of morals and beliefs, has also limited my understanding of the beliefs of others and what values and messages they hold true. The Bible is but one book. Yet Judaism and Christianity have an abundance of branches from the same religious root and each with their own interpretations of the same material.

From the beginning of the book it became clear to me that I had misinterpreted much of what I was reading in the Bible, particularly stories related to sex. This was caused by a misunderstanding of the Biblical words, many of which are unfamiliar to those in modern society. Words such as "feet," "know," and "eating" were all used as sexual innuendos (Coogan 6). For instance, in Genesis after the forbidden fruit had been consumed, the Bible says, "the man knew his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain." I had read this exact story for this class earlier in the semester and was totally oblivious to what was actually being said. Noticeably, I understood the result of Eve becoming pregnant, but for

whatever reason, I did not correlate the word “knew” as being synonymous with sexual relations.

It is not just the wording that I failed to recognize, but even more so, the meanings behind the stories themselves. Sex appears in the Bible far more than I had anticipated upon first reading, and I believe my misunderstanding was mostly due to the nature of church, and the strong dislike of sexual conversation within the Mass. While it is true that some stories are considered inappropriate for your Sunday gatherings, I was astonished to have not heard them at all. The stories relating to Lot and his daughters were particularly shocking, as well as the general idea that a woman’s purpose was primarily to produce offspring.

In biblical times, women, especially daughters, were considered very much as a form of currency. The father had rights to establish who his daughters would marry as well as setting a marriage price, which fluctuated based on her virginity, or lack thereof (27). Women were also not able to hold public office; they contributed to the religious ceremonies by playing music, cooking, and performing other menial tasks (39). Now, while women currently still face instances of discrimination, it seems we have come a long way from the views of the early Israelites. After reading the chapter that Coogan had designated to the role of women in the pre-monarchic era, I was flabbergasted. Today, we commonly see women side by side with men providing leadership during church services. They can contribute in almost all forms of the ceremony, and they certainly have the right to choose their own spouses. In my opinion it is shameful to put a price on a human, let alone a family member, and

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allocate their worth based on various factors including sexual activity. Reading this made me feel great sympathy for the women of that time, as well as creating a new found respect for the devout sacrifices they made for their family and religion.

It was also humbling to read of the importance of fertility to the women, and the extent to which families would go to ensure they “carried on the family name.” Wives that were unable to give birth would commonly allow their husbands to take another wife, so that she may produce in her stead. Such conduct is shown through the story of Abraham and Sara. In this day and age, this would be considered an extreme breach of fidelity.

It should be noted that to understand the scenario of Abraham and Sara, it must be understood the way in which marriage was viewed during ancient times. Throughout that time period, marriage had a sole purpose of producing offspring, not creating an everlasting love between two inseparable beings (63). In fact, this time period would suggest marriage occurred numerous times in a man’s life so that he could produce sons to continue his legacy once he had perished. It explains why many important biblical characters had several wives, and also elaborates on the Bible’s lack of text concerning love within marriage.

With that being said, in today’s society love is considered the most valuable part of a marriage and the sole purpose for continuing that relationship. We no longer fear that our family will one day die out of existence, or that we have not made our worldly impact without creating a strong bloodline. In my experiences

with the Catholic faith, it is clear that the church's primary focus in the sacrament of marriage is to form two compatible people into one holy being. This is what I have grown to know and continue to believe. The time periods have changed, the environment has changed, the need for constant reproduction is behind us, and so marriage may now be seen as something more.

The book also discusses the forbidden sexual relationships found in the Bible. This consists of primarily the seventh commandment; "Thou shall not commit adultery." The initial interpretation of the seventh commandment was meant for Israelite men to abstain from having sexual relations with another man's wife. The idea was formed because women were considered property, and through marriage the man had paid for his wife, so adultery created an expropriation of property and possibility of pregnancy (102). The common belief is that the commandment was set in place as an extension of preserving others property, just as you would not take their slave, ox, or anything belonging to your neighbor, nor should you take his wife (102). Nevertheless, ministers and preachers have continued to put their own interpretation of the commandment as a ban on sexual immorality. The Catholic Church has magnified the meaning of the seventh commandment to encompass everything from rape and prostitution to premarital sex and artificial birth control, and all that ranges in between (103).

In my opinion, the seventh commandment is open to interpretation. The prior reasoning makes sense. However, the Bible was written in a much different time and applying our own personal truths to its content can be just as precarious as

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ignoring them in the first place. For instance, the Bible commands that people are not to touch the skin of a pig. Does modern day society condemn football and its participants? The problem occurs when people take an ancient teaching from the Bible, accept it as 'Truth, and expect all others to do the same. Much of religion is based upon interpretation rather than factual information, and our failure as a society to recognize that fact creates the religious hostility that we see today.

Coogan's writing gives me great insight into the parts of the Bible that I had not previously known of, nor understood. I believe that the Bible does set a sexual standard throughout its writing and creation, but that standard varies from person to person, time period to time period, and from one religion to another. Much of what we believe is based on our own moral values, what we have been taught, or even more probable yet, what suits the lifestyle that we enjoy.

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The Benefits and Regulations of Electronic Cigarettes

SARAH KENNEY

ENG 2130: Research Writing and Argumentation: Sciences, Spring 2015

Nominated by: Mr. Scott Geisel

Sarah is pursuing a degree in Music at WSU. She is a musician, athlete, and leader.

Sarah enjoys performing, running, biking, learning, and working hard. She also loves time with her friends and family.

Sarah notes:

I wrote this paper to discover the truth about electronic cigarettes beyond their social impact. I hope this paper enlightens many people on the benefits of this technology that may be able to lengthen the lives of our friends or family who smoke.

Mr. Geisel notes:

Sarah's article clearly defines a topic and questions to pursue, organizes the data and evidence into sections with good use of evidence, and provides conclusions and

discussion. This effectively uses elements of scholarly writing but with language and accessibility for lay readers – which is a premise for the course.

Abstract

The use of electronic cigarettes is highly controversial today. The accomplishments in research and regulation are growing, and the potential to improve the safety and usage of electronic cigarettes is vast. The current regulations on where electronic cigarettes can be used in America are slowly progressing. While the health benefits of electronic cigarettes are vast, many people are uneducated and misinformed on possible health and safety risks that may arise from the use of electronic cigarettes. There is currently some support for expanding federal regulation on electronic cigarette use in public places. If Americans became more informed on the importance of electronic cigarettes as a safer option for the cessation of smoking and the need for regulation for the safety of bystanders, support would most likely increase. Expanding federal regulation on where electronic cigarettes can be used would expand opportunities for advancements greatly, and increase the use of electronic cigarettes as well.

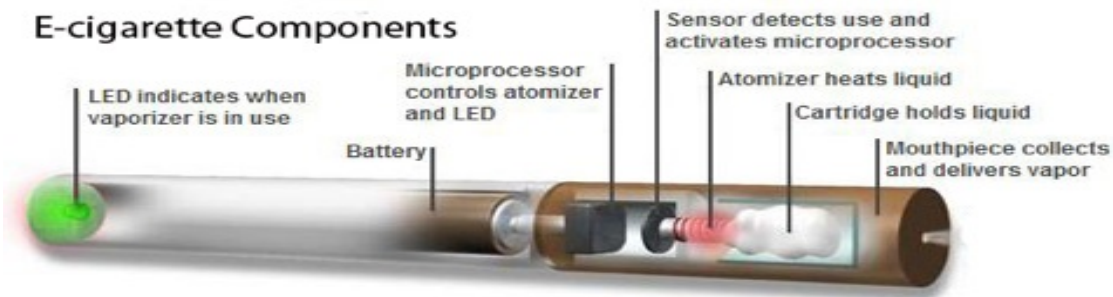


Figure 1 Visual of the Mechanics of an Electronic Cigarette. Source: How, 2014

Introduction

Electronic cigarettes are becoming an increasingly popular method of smoking either purely for enjoyment or to use during the cessation process. As seen in Figure 1, electronic cigarettes contain a rechargeable lithium battery, a cartridge containing nicotine, flavoring fluid, vegetable glycerin, and propylene glycol. They also contain an atomizer which has a heating coil that will vaporize the fluid to create the vapor. They also have an LED light at the bottom that lights up when it is being used. The fluid will be vaporized by the battery to create the vapor that the user will inhale and then puff out to recreate the sensation of smoking. Currently, electronic cigarettes are undergoing significant scrutiny as a social norm because of a general fear of electronic cigarettes, due to the lack of education and awareness to the general public on the benefits and safety of electronic cigarettes. Electronic cigarettes are

also under scrutiny from larger corporations such as the Food and Drug Administration, because they are becoming a threat to the cigarette industry. However, electronic cigarettes are standing out through the scrutiny as a healthier and safer option for smokers. If provided with proper regulation to keep bystanders healthy and happy, and used properly and with discretion by users, electronic cigarettes can save lives.

Benefits

Cigarettes contain toxic chemicals such as ammonia, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, polonium, and over 20 more toxic chemicals (Smoking, 2014).

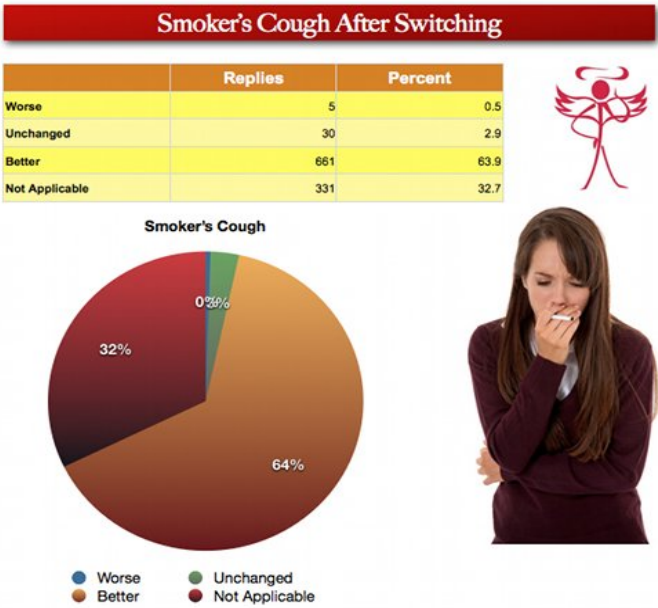


Figure 2 Smoker's cough decreasing after switching to Electronic cigarettes. Source: Dunworth, 2014

Electronic cigarettes only contain the three basic chemicals of nicotine, propylene glycol, and vegetable glycerin. Although nicotine is still the addictive substance in cigarettes and electronic cigarettes,

the propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin are significantly less harmful to the user than the above listed chemicals contained in regular cigarettes. Users can also add flavors to their electronic cigarette liquid, but this is commonly overlooked since it is both optional and harmless as well. The biggest benefit of the electronic cigarette is that the user is able to control nicotine levels at their discretion. They can do this either by purchasing their fluid with specific levels of nicotine and lowering it over a period of time, or by making their own fluid and controlling the level nicotine as they make it. This allows electronic cigarettes to be used as an aid in the cessation of smoking which can lead to the prevention of harmful effects of normal cigarettes such as asthma, emphysema, risk of heart attack, risk of heart disease, and a long list of cancers. The user can start out with the same levels of nicotine in their electronic cigarettes as in their normal cigarettes and gradually wean themselves off the nicotine over time, and then they can work on the hand-to-mouth gesture. In recent studies (Brown, 2013), after switching to electronic cigarettes, over 75% of people out of approx. 1000 people responded saying that they had experienced increased lung capacity, increased ability to do strenuous activities, and a decrease in smoker's cough, as seen in Figure 2.

Healthy and Safety Concerns

The most apparent concern is that nicotine is addictive. However, electronic cigarettes can be used without any nicotine: solely with flavoring, and

other fluids. The users of electronic cigarettes can also control the level of nicotine content in the liquid either by purchasing it with lower levels of nicotine or making their own. The ability to control the amount of nicotine in the fluid can enable smokers who are trying to quit by switching to electronic cigarettes to ease the cessation of smoking by eliminating nicotine, the addictive substance, but keeping the hand to mouth gesture. Electronic cigarettes are also rumored to create formaldehyde when smoked on high heat levels. In order to create formaldehyde, the user would have to hold down the button for over 100 seconds or have an extremely powerful device and use it irresponsibly. However, after 100 seconds of holding down the button on an electronic cigarette the temperature of the vapor would be too hot and uncomfortable to smoke (Stein, 2015). It's the equivalent of cooking a steak for 18 hours. Although the steak would be filled with carcinogens, it would be completely charcoal and no one human would actually be able to consume it. The vapor that is emitted also contains low levels of propylene glycol, which has been the primary concern of bystanders as far as chemicals in the vapor are concerned. There was an experiment done in 1972 by The Journal of Food and Cosmetic Toxicology on the toxicity of propylene glycol over time (Gaunt, 1972). Sixty rats were cared for and fed 5 – 6 kg of propylene glycol in their diet for two years. The rats were tested on their body-weight gain, food consumption, urinary cell excretion, and the urine-concentrating ability of the kidneys. The treatments of propylene glycol over two years seemed to have no effect on any of the rats for the

mortality rates or previously mentioned tests. There was a smaller control group of rats that was also tested over a shorter period of time to see if the effects would increase over shorter periods of times, and this seemed to exhibit the same reaction as the larger group of rats, with the propylene glycol making no difference in the life of the rats. Propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin are found in everyday foods such as Caesar dressing, vitamins, and shampoo. As research is being pursued on electronic cigarettes and the chemicals involved, more positive results are coming about. However, the results of these experiments are not common fact to the average public and some studies on propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin are 2-3 decades old, making current smokers looking for ways to quit, skeptical, and making bystanders nervous. The need for funding for new studies to be put out and help educate the average public is increasing at a fast rate, due to the increasing popularity of electronic cigarettes.

Concerns for the users of electronic cigarettes are becoming minimal as more research is being done to support the benefits they provide to the user. However, now that they are becoming more popular, concern is moving from the users to bystanders. As stated before, electronic cigarettes only contain three basic chemicals: Propylene glycol, nicotine (if used), vegetable glycerin, and, at the users' discretion, flavors. Vegetable glycerin is a simple compound and after heated up and smoked, it changes from "glycerin" to "glycerin vapor" and is then metabolized by the body and results in water and carbon dioxide (What, 2015). Propylene glycol has

been studied extensively over the last few decades and research is coming to show that it has no harmful effects on the human body in vapor form, and that nearby bystanders would not be in any danger if it was inhaled as a secondhand vapor. The biggest danger for bystanders would be the nicotine content. For those who are using electronic cigarettes without nicotine, by the time the vapor has been exhaled, the vapor is harmless to any nearby bystander. However, without asking the user if there is nicotine in the vapor they are using, it is impossible to identify whether there is nicotine in the exhaled vapor. It's common to find some irritation in the lungs of someone who uses electronic cigarettes because of the frequent act of inhalation. However, since bystanders do not frequently experience the inhalation sensation, mists could be irritating to some individuals (Quick, 2013). Although the majority of the nicotine in the solution will be inhaled and absorbed by the user of the electronic cigarette, for those nearby who may be sensitive to nicotine or vapor, any amount of nicotine or vapor can be an irritant. This is why there is a need to regulate the use of electronic cigarettes in public places, similar or equal to that of what's currently in place for normal cigarettes.

Regulation

The use of electronic cigarettes is banned in currently standing smoke-free venues such as work places, restaurants, and bars in New Jersey, Utah, North Dakota, and Arkansas. All other states have at least one county that has decided to

restrict use of electronic cigarettes in the work place, restaurants, bars, and some gambling halls (U.S. State, 2015). One of the major concerns for the selling of electronic cigarettes regulations is age restriction. Suppliers of electronic cigarettes are making large efforts to educate store owners selling electronic cigarettes on the dangers of addiction and who and when it is appropriate to sell to. The Transportation Security Administration has placed appropriate restrictions on traveling with electronic cigarettes as similar to cellphones, in that they must be off at all times in flight, and fluids must be in bottles and small plastic bags while traveling (Traveler, 2008). They are also only permitted in use when outside or in a smoking lounge. There are no current national regulations on the sales or usage of electronic cigarettes. The FDA has also been making efforts to regulate electronic cigarettes, but nothing has been done as concerns have all been disproven, or proved simply theoretical.

Conclusion

Electronic cigarettes have a vast potential to improve the lives of current smokers who may be interested in making the switch to electronic cigarettes. Many studies have been proven on the effectiveness of electronic cigarettes in regards to ability to aid in the cessation of smoking, and improved health of the user, such as a decrease in chances of lung cancer, developing asthma, and emphysema. Few regulations have been put in place on the usage of electronic cigarettes in public

places, and the next step is to encourage the Federal and State governments to put in place regulations on where electronic cigarettes are appropriate and safe to be used for the safety of electronic cigarette users, and for the people around them. If more Americans were educated on electronic cigarettes, support would likely increase, and bills protecting and expanding federal and state regulations would likely be passed. If federal and state regulations for electronic cigarettes were expanded and funding and efforts put toward research were increased, the full potential of electronic cigarettes could be achieved.

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Poster: Embryonic Stem Cell Research

EMILLIE PARTRIDGE

ENG 2130: Research Writing and Argumentation: Sciences, Spring 2015

Nominated by Mr. Scott Geisel

Emillie is a junior at Wright State pursuing an Honors Chemistry degree with an emphasis on Pre-Med. She is a member of the Dean's circle for the College of Science and Mathematics and the National Society for Collegiate Scholars.

Emillie notes:

Before starting this research project, I had only ever heard bad things about stem cell research. I wanted to learn if there was good being done with this research, and if that outweighed the ethical issues. From this project, I learned many good things that ESC research is doing, and I hope others see the promise in it that I did.

Mr. Geisel notes:

Emillie's poster defines the topic and research question clearly, provides a good introduction, organizes the evidence and data clearly, uses effective visuals, and delivers everything precisely and concisely.

Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Emilie Partridge, Wright State University, 2015

Research Question

Do the current and potential benefits outweigh the moral and ethical issues?

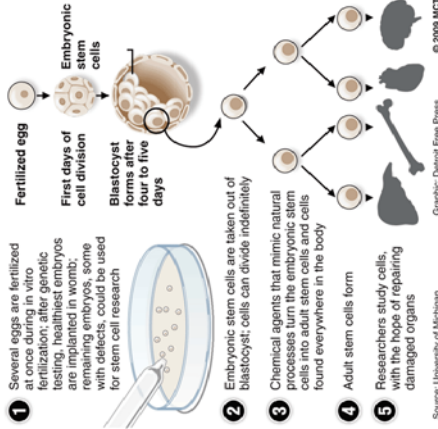
Introduction:

- Embryonic Stem cells are unspecialized cells that can replicate indefinitely and differentiate into all 3 germ layers. The germ layers are the layers of cells the form during the formation and development of an embryo. Embryonic stem cell lines come from unused embryos from in-vitro fertilization that were otherwise doomed. These stem cells are used in research focused on the cure for degenerative diseases and ultimately the key of human development and aging.

Stem Cell Cultures

Researchers say embryonic stem cells could unlock secrets of disease and lead to cures for illnesses such as Alzheimer's and diabetes.

Making an embryonic stem cell culture



Accomplishments

- In rat models of Parkinson's disease, embryonic stem cells transplanted into their brains develop into functional neurons, resulting in functional improvement. However, tumors developed in about 20% of the animals. Stem cell culture has overcome the tumor problem and is one of the most promising therapies.
- Skeletal muscles, endothelial cells, liver, pancreatic cells, and others have all been generated from stem cell lines. Therapeutic applications of these cells has not yet been determined, but the potential is vast.

Regulations:

Current guidelines were established in August 2001 by President Bush:

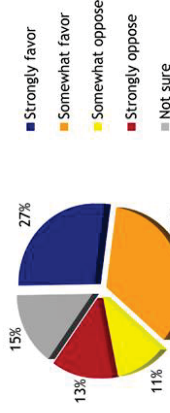
- 1) Stem cells must be derived from an embryo that was created for reproductive purposes.
- 2) The embryo is no longer needed for this purpose.
- 3) Informed consent must be obtained for the donation of the embryo.
- 4) No financial inducements are provided for the donation of the embryo. In addition, American researchers with federal funding are restricted to using the 64 embryonic stem cell lines that existed before August 2001.
- However, out of these 64 stem cell lines very few are available, and many are extremely expensive.

Ethical Debate

- In order to derive the stem cells for research an embryo must be destroyed. To some, this is equivalent to destroying human life because they view embryos to have the same moral status as adults and children. This is mostly a religious issue.
- The other point of view is that an embryo is just a cluster of cells, and therefore, has no moral status and lacks consciousness. From this perspective, there is no ethical issue.
- A third point of view lies somewhere in the middle, viewing embryos as having no moral status, but deserving respect as a developing form of human life. This viewpoint backs stem cell research, but for the most serious reasons.

Voters Favor Expanding Funding for ESC Research

Do you favor or oppose expanding federal funding for research using embryonic stem cells?



RESEARCH/AMERICA
Source: A Research/America poll of likely voters conducted in partnership with JZ Analytics in August 2012.

Position

- Currently, embryonic stem cell research has so much potential and promise, but is hindered by the restrictions in place on which stem cell lines may be used by researchers with federal funding. If these restrictions were lifted, stem cell research may unlock the secrets of human development and aging.

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